

# FAITH IN THE MODERN WORLD

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EDGAR YOUNG MULLINS

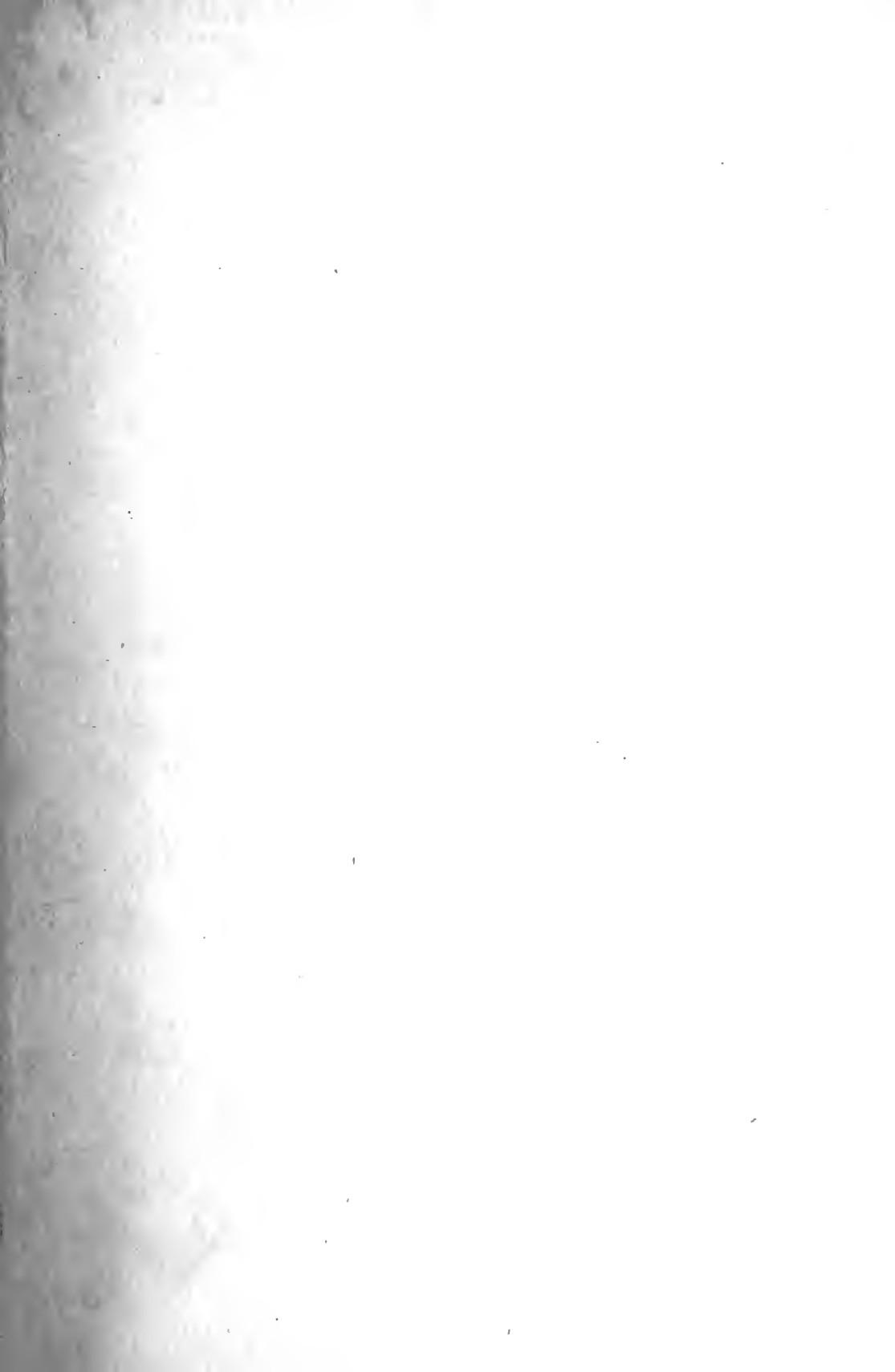


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EDGAR YOUNG MULLINS



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE  
SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD  
OF THE  
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## EXPLANATORY

In presenting these sermons and addresses of my husband, Dr. E. Y. Mullins, a list which he had made for such a volume was followed as closely as possible. But the careful revision which he would have given each one before publication must be forever lacking. They are, therefore, presented largely as he prepared them for platform delivery.

In the work of collecting and arranging, Dr. H. W. Tribble, now head of the department of Theology of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, gave most efficient service, which is gratefully acknowledged.

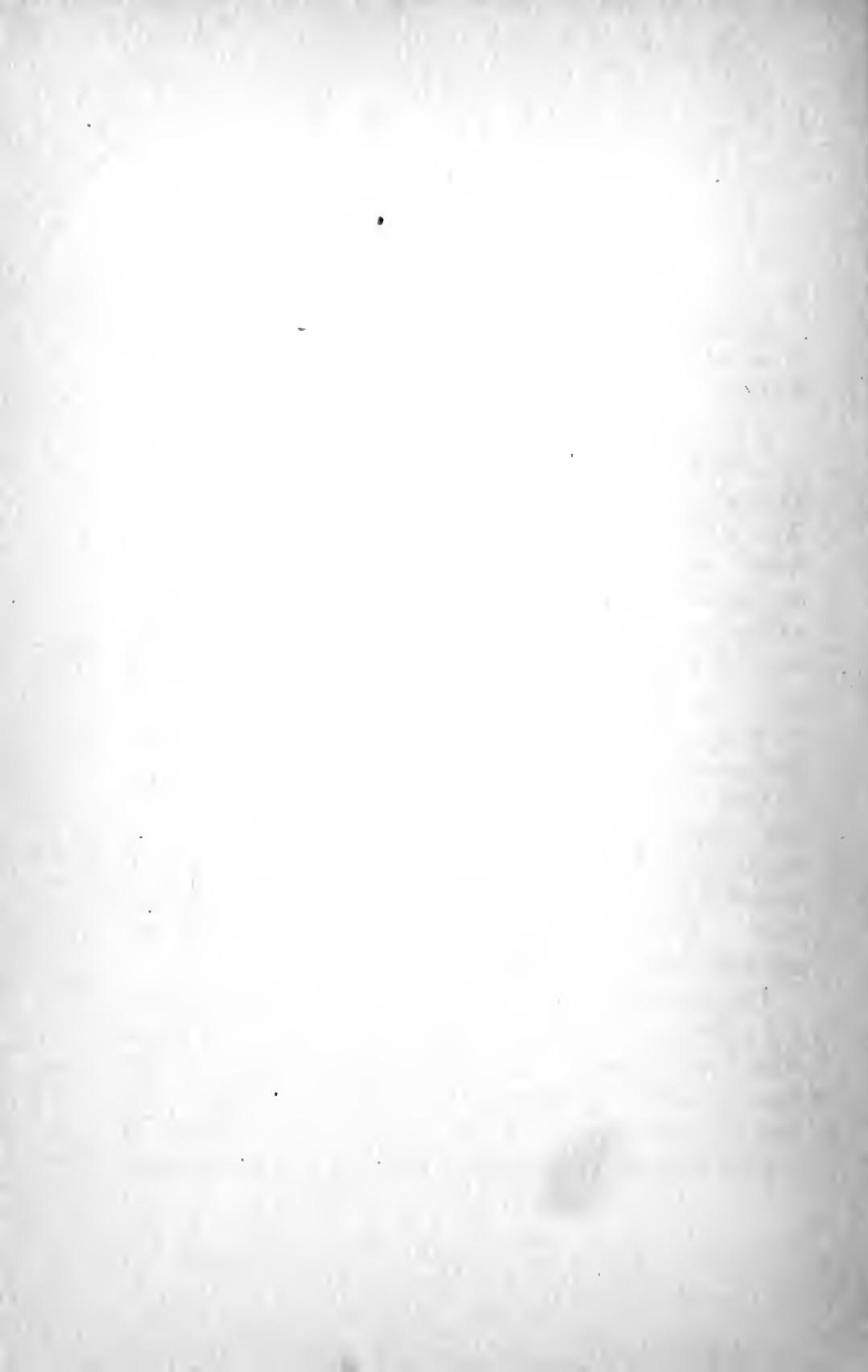
ISLA MAY MULLINS.

Louisville, Ky.



# I

## THE RIGHT TO BELIEVE



# I

## THE RIGHT TO BELIEVE

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even our faith.*—*1 John 5: 4.*

A few years ago there appeared a little book entitled *The Right to Believe*. In a sense it was based upon a previous essay by the late Professor William James on *The Will to Believe*. The two themes are closely related. It was shown in the latter essay that there are certain choices presented to man. Some of these are trivial, and others are momentous. You may drink coffee with or without sugar, or you may refuse to drink it at all. The option is trivial. You may choose to be a loyal patriot or a traitor to your country. The option here is momentous. So also you may choose to believe in God or choose not to believe. Again the choice is in the highest degree momentous. You may freely will to believe in God. You may act upon that belief in a practical way, and you will find convincing evidence that there is a God, both within your own soul and in the outward signs of his presence in your life.

The right to believe is a closely related thought, but not exactly the same. We may look at man in his spiritual constitution, and in his relations to the world around him and ask the question: has he a right to believe? The text declares that faith is man's organ or instrument of victory over the world. Surely then there must be some-

thing in the make of the soul of man which is a warrant for faith. I propose to consider in this sermon the things which justify us in believing. Indeed when we look at the spiritual nature of man closely it becomes quite evident that he is so made that faith is the natural or normal expression of his nature. There are certain deep instincts in him which cannot be evaded. They impel us to believe in God. They awaken in us a sense of dependence upon a Being greater than ourselves and greater than the world around us. I name some of these fundamental instincts of man which show clearly his right to believe.

1. First of all, I name the instinct of thought. The psalmist says that the "fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The fool did not say it in his head. There are too many evidences of God presented to us in the world about us to permit us to doubt. It is not the lack of evidence, but the lack of desire for God which leads to the denial. The fool does not want God, the idea of God is painful to him, and so he says in his heart, there is no God.

Thought runs back over the chain of cause and effect in the world about us and it finds only an endless chain. We never rise higher than natural causes. These are like a row of bricks. You push over the first one, it strikes the second, the second strikes the third, and so on to the end—only in this case there is no end, but rather an indefinite series or circle of natural causes. And yet we know there must have been some One to push over the first brick. There must be somewhere a Power infinite and supreme on which all depends. The chain cannot be suspended upon nothing.

Again, we may look at nature as a graded series, rising ever higher to man and intelligence. Inorganic matter,

living vegetable forms, sentient animal forms, and then intelligent, moral, human beings. Surely intelligence must have created these forms. Divine purpose must run through this marvelous series of creations. A divine hand must have been upon it all. It surely could not have produced itself. You must explain all by the highest which appears. Mind explains matter, but matter does not explain mind. You can explain the beginning by what you see at the end, but you cannot reverse the process and explain mind by the inorganic matter of the universe. In like manner the instinct of thought makes us see that the next stage in man's existence is immortality. This life cannot explain him. The whole system of nature ends abruptly if man is the climax, and if man perishes like the beasts. The stairway of nature leads up to man step by step. There is another step into the upper room, where God and immortality are found, or else the stairway leads nowhere and life is a meaningless riddle.

Thus we see that the very instinct of thought in all its phases pushes us out and up to a God who explains all. Thought is stultified, the world is a meaningless chaos unless a key to the whole is found in an all-wise, all-loving holy Being whom we call God. The right to believe, therefore, is based upon the instinct of thought.

2. I name secondly the instinct of conscience. When David had committed a terrible sin against a brother man, he was overwhelmed by his sense of sin against God. He had sinned against Uriah, yes, but he exclaims: "against thee and thee only have I sinned." The great reality in his conscience, after all, was God himself. At its root and in its essence all sin is sin against God. Thus we may say the moral constitution of man shows his



right to believe. His conscience is a divine voice within. It is like a bell. It rings softly when the smallest sin is committed. It rings loudly when great sins are committed. Conscience cannot be escaped. It is often perverted. Perhaps in some it is almost extinguished by indulgence in sin. And yet for the great majority of mankind, where the moral nature has been developed under Christian influences, conscience shows a difference when compared with other faculties. You can control your feelings. You can in large measure control your will. You can control your thoughts. A little self-discipline, a little resolution, a little concentrated purpose, and the wandering thoughts are brought back; the wayward emotions can we hold in check; the fickle will may be subdued. But an awakened and accusing conscience cannot be silenced. Murderers unconsciously seek to share

↙ their secret with others. A constant stream of money flows into the national treasury from those who have stolen from the Government. No man can find peace and happiness who tries to live with a compromised conscience. Conscience can be explained adequately only when we see in it the presence of God. It is the divine law written in the constitution of man. It is developed, of course, under man's ordinary environment, and in his struggle with sin and circumstances. Its particular phases, as found among the peoples of the earth, will to some degree vary. But at bottom conscience implies God and an eternal law of righteousness. We may say then with the utmost confidence, that the instinct of conscience vindicates man's right to believe.

3. In the third place, I name the instinct of prayer. Professor William James once raised the question, not whether men may expect answers to prayer, but why men

pray at all. He replied to the question by saying that men pray because of their desire for the fellowship of the Supreme Companion. Man is a social being. He is a being with ideals. He loves companionship. He is never content with any companionship short of the perfect. Hence he seeks God in prayer. Certainly it is true that the universe is a lonely place unless there is a great Being over all, and more powerful than all, with whom we can have fellowship.

This is not the place to discuss fully the meaning of prayer. It is a many-sided question. But it is proper to point out the universality of the instinct to pray. All men do not pray constantly as they should. But it has been observed that men do pray in times of distress and danger and physical suffering. Stoic endurance may enable men to meet life's trials in sullen submission. But many who do not know the power of prayer bitterly rebel, and life becomes a harrowing experience.

It is also a very familiar fact in Christian circles that prayer is a transforming influence in a human life of immense significance. It is simply the inevitable expression of a living faith in God. The victories of prayer are manifold. Is it a matter of endurance and pain and suffering? Paul tells us the secret. He besought the Lord to relieve him of a thorn in the flesh. The petition was not granted, but victory came in the power to endure. "I can do all things through Christ." Is it a question of toil and loneliness, and sustained idealism in the midst of all kinds of difficulties and dangers? Then let Livingstone in the darkness of the dark continent pouring out his life for Christ, and dying on his knees in the act of prayer, supply the answer. Is it a question of courage and great achievement in national life? Then let John

Knox supply the answer in his famous prayer, "Lord, give me Scotland or I die."

Thus the instinct of prayer is man's desire for victory. It is his inevitable sense of dependence upon a Supreme Being, intelligent, loving, accessible and ready to help. By the very make of our souls we are impelled to reach above ourselves for divine help. And unless our spiritual nature is endowed with false instincts, unless we are led astray by the deepest impulses of our being, we may say that the instinct of prayer in the human soul is a clear vindication of our right to believe.

4. I name next the instinct of suffering. The classic example of suffering in the Bible is the case of Job. He lost property, children, friends, health. He was stripped bare. He faced a complete contradiction in his experience of all he had believed regarding prosperity. Prosperity hitherto had been the measure of a man's piety, according to the prevailing belief. Job was conscious of no great transgression, and hence his suffering was at first a fathomless mystery. But he was driven by it to revise all his former views, and especially to seek God's face for new light on the problem of existence. But his early experiences were baffling. "I go forward and he is not there. I go backward and cannot find him. I seek him on the right hand and the left, but I fail. Oh, that I knew where I might find him. Oh, that there were a daysman, a mediator, someone to speak to God for me and to me for God." Thus he voices his perplexity and doubt. But Job is not vanquished by his doubts. He conquers them. Two truths gradually dawn upon him. One is that there is a future life when all earthly inequalities shall be righted. The other is that there is a mediator or daysman, One who can mediate between him and God.

He finally exclaims, "I know that my redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job 19: 25-27).

The great truth which the experience of Job teaches us is that the instinct of suffering, which looks to God for relief, brings revelation of God. Truth breaks through the clouds of pain and sorrow. Disaster purifies the soul and gives it new vision. The divine light shines brightest, in the path of suffering. The experience of suffering is, as it were, a Messianic experience. It brings out the great truth that God loves us, that there is something human in God, that he sympathizes with us in our pain and loss and anguish. The coming of Christ was the expression in human and divine form of this great truth. Sometimes our suffering is itself vicarious, as illustrated in Browning's poem "Saul," where David yearns to bless Saul with a desire that is heartbreaking in its intensity. He fails in his anguished yearning for Saul. But out of his experience of impotent love, the helpless desire to bless another, his mind rises to God and the great discovery is made that God himself yearns over the sinful and the lost. There is something in God, so David concludes, that is greater than anything in man. There is a love in him which towers far above all human forms of love. That is to say, David also finds that there is a mediator between God and man, who embodies triumphant love, a love unconquered by human limitation, and yet a love which is like human love. The climax of David's experience is summed up in the exclamation, "See the Christ stands!" Thus it becomes clear that the

instinct of suffering, whether a self-centered suffering, or an altruistic suffering, if it pursues the right path, is rewarded by the new discovery of God. And so suffering vindicates our right to believe.

5. Again, I name the instinct of courage. Here also we find that the soul of man speaks a great message and leads to great revelations. The great doers of history have been the men who believed that God is working with them. Men of faith have been the great conquerors in the spiritual realm. The greatness may be that of a spiritual leader, like Abraham or Moses; it may be that of a great prophet like Jeremiah, or Isaiah; it may be that of a great apostle like Paul; of a great reformer like Luther or Savonarola; of a great saint like Bernard of Clairveaux; of a great missionary like Carey or Judson. But in every instance it is the instinct of courage sanctified by the conviction that God is a reality in the life of his servant and that he is working towards the great ends of righteousness.

We may take the whole question out of the realm of theology and view it simply from the standpoint of religious psychology. We may ask what power upon life and civilization is exerted by the courageous souls of history by means of their belief in the reality of God and of his purpose in history. The answer comes in a thousand forms that the conviction of man that God is working out a great purpose in human affairs, adopted by brave men in the conflict with sin and circumstances, has been the most tremendous force for the improvement of the world. There are great eras when this truth shines clearly. The Reformation era with Luther at the diet of Worms, Savonarola burned at the stake in Florence, Cromwell beheading Charles the First and the English

Revolution, the Puritan and Pilgrim movement to the western hemisphere; the heroic struggles of the martyr periods throughout history, all combine to demonstrate the reality of God when men really accept the belief and act upon it in sincerity. For these heroes of faith their belief in God is a creative force. They bring into being new civilizations. They inaugurate new eras. Someone has said that if there had been no new world for Columbus to discover here in the West, God would have created one to reward such faith. This is, of course, an exaggerated way of expressing a great truth. But it is a fact that faith has created new eras, new civilizations, and has lifted the world to new levels of righteousness. In a word we may say that courage for righteousness demonstrates the reality of God. And I am not wrong in asserting that the instinct of courage supplies a triumphant vindication of the right to believe.

6. Finally, I name the instinct of hope. One of the most marvelous of all the peculiarities of the spiritual life of man is its unused powers, its unexplored depths. We use but a bare fraction of our brains. Every new step in complex modern life shows that man has a great reserve of unused powers. Some of these seem to point to a future life. The present does not satisfy. It awakens expectations beyond itself. The natural reason of man in its clearer moments has foreseen the outcome in immortality. Sometimes the whole matter is dim and vague. And yet running through all the earthly experience is the abiding conviction that here in time, upon the earthly stage, we are being introduced to and taking part in a great drama. Not that the present is unimportant in itself. It is rather that it is of the highest importance because it is a part of something extending

far beyond the present. It is the prelude to a drama which requires all time and all space, and all the cycles of eternity for its completion. The conviction never leaves the heart of man:

*Man*

Here sits he shaping wings to fly,  
His heart forebodes a mystery,  
He names the name eternity.  
He seems to hear a heavenly Friend,  
And through thick veils to apprehend  
A labor working to an end.

Thus Tennyson expressed it, and it is true. The instinct of hope lives and thrives in man no matter how materialism tries to dim it, or cold reason to extinguish it. Man in all races and ages has dimly or clearly foreseen a future life. The belief in that life is of the nature of an instinct going to the very depths of his being. It is intensified by suffering. It is deepened by injustice and wrong. It is clarified by the inequalities of our earthly life. It varies in the degrees of its manifestation, but it is ever present. Man looks forward to emancipation. The earth and its environment are too small for him. As Paul says, "We that are in this tabernacle do groan." But we groan, not because the world is too big for us, but because we are too big for the world. We long for a large life where our powers shall have full scope.

Some birds in Northern Europe migrate at the approach of winter thousands of miles towards equatorial Africa. They fly days at a time on unwearied wing towards the land of sunshine away from the cold of the north. One of these birds was confined in a cage when first hatched and kept there until grown. When the sea-

son for migration came it was found seated on its perch in the cage rapidly beating its wings for hours and hours at a time. Thus it manifested its migrating instinct. Dimly present in the bird's imagination perhaps was some picture of a far-off clime of sunshine and food and flowers. So also man beats his wings in his earthly cage of time and space. He also is a migratory bird. His soul pictures a far-away land of spiritual rest and peace. He longs for immortality and God.

I have been using the word instinct in its general meaning of man's impulses towards the ends of his being. And I have shown that in all these deeper impulses we find a vindication of his right to believe in God. Faith in God is his inalienable right. The instinct of thought, and of conscience, the instinct of prayer and of suffering, the instinct of courage and of hope—all these vindicate man's right to believe. The whole make and trend of his soul impels him to God.

In conclusion we may say truly that man's faith in God, and especially his faith in Jesus Christ as the revealer of God and salvation, is the supreme conviction of his soul, and the fountain head of all power. As someone has expressed it, "When faith in God goes, man the thinker loses his greatest thought; man the worker loses his greatest motive; man the sinner loses his only Saviour; man the sufferer loses his surest refuge; man the lover loses his fairest vision; and man the mortal loses his only hope."

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## II

### THE FREEDOM OF FAITH



## II

### THE FREEDOM OF FAITH

I am glad to comply with the request of *The Independent* to discuss in its columns my recent book, *Christianity at the Crossroads* (Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville). One point seems to be hard for some readers to grasp. It is that the book nowhere appeals to authority. It appeals to truth. Some fundamentalists have criticized it because it does not set up a doctrine of an "infallible and authoritative" Scripture. Some modernists who perhaps read the chapter headings, criticize it because, as they allege, it does appeal to authority. The fundamentalist criticism is futile because the idea of an "infallible and authoritative" Scripture is apart from the argument. The modernist criticism is based upon a fiction of the modernist imagination.

I am an evangelical Christian. This does not mean any form of words set forth in any particular doctrinal system. It means acceptance of the New Testament as a substantially true record of facts, including the supernatural origin and works of Christ, his atoning death, his resurrection from the dead and present reign and power.

My evangelical beliefs are not imposed upon me. They are freely chosen. They come by a perfectly free and legitimate spiritual and intellectual process, that is by honest weighing of evidence and acceptance of basic facts. The fundamentalist often insists that you must

first build up a doctrine of an infallible Scripture and then demand the acceptance of the gospel on the basis of the doctrine. I hold that the facts of the gospel precede the doctrine of inspiration and must be dealt with first.

The modernist assumes that when he has (as he thinks) successfully attacked the doctrine of an "infallible Scripture" he has destroyed the gospel. He is wrong. He also must face the facts.

Here we come to the heart of the matter. Christianity joins hands with science in respect for facts and in hatred and repudiation of sham and make-believes. The common ground of science and the Christian religion is *loyalty to fact*.

The book is a plea for all the great human rights: the rights of science, the rights of philosophy, the rights of religion. All of these seek truth based upon facts. The methods of research differ, the aim is the common aim to know the truth. Science works with the principle of causality. Philosophy works with rationality. Religion deals with personality. It is the differences that give them distinctive value. It is folly to attempt to flatten out the universe, to level it down to one principle. Electrons, atoms, molecules are interesting subjects of study. But you do not find love, joy, peace, longsuffering revealed in them. Matter, force and motion are fundamental facts of physics. But you do not discover faith, loyalty, hope, endurance, sacrifice in these physical realities. You find them in personal relations.

Certainty in religion is religiously conditioned. Certainty in science is scientifically conditioned. Certainty in philosophy is philosophically conditioned. Science, philosophy and religion are sisters, free, untrammeled, joyous

and harmonious when pursuing their respective aims. There is and can be no conflict when they have each wrought out their problems fully. Each is autonomous. Religion exists in its own right, has its own methods of verification, its own canons of research, its own criteria of truth.

The diversity of method as between science and religion is based upon the distinction between physical causation and free causation, that is, between will and force. Men discover religious truth through the experience of God's saving grace in Christ. The facts and reality of God and salvation are known thus through a living experience. This involves an act of the will. Men discover truth in physical science by observing the activities of matter and energy. Become as a little child in the presence of any fact in nature if you would know the meaning of the fact. Become as a little child in the presence of Jesus Christ if you would know the truth of the Christian religion.

The attempt to reduce the two modes of arriving at truth to one is absurd. Checkers and chess are played on the same kind of a board with sixty-four squares, but by different rules. To insist upon playing checkers by the rules of chess, or the other way around, is nonsense. Play the game by the rules of the game. It is equally foolish to try to "reduce" religion to physical science or science to religion. Both are "scientific," of course, in their loyalty to fact. They enrich and re-enforce each other by diversity of method in discovering truth.

Christianity is based upon history. The gospel is first of all a fact, as Professor Carnegie Simpson has so well said—the fact of Christ. The center of the current controversy is the question as to the facts of the New Tes-

tament. Modernists usually substitute ideas for facts. Fundamentalists often miss the point by substituting doctrines for facts.

There are four ways in which the modernist attempts to set aside the facts of the New Testament. These are the way of the philosophic world-view, the way of physical science, the way of historical criticism and the way of comparative religion. We evangelicals welcome all these ways of discovering truth. If our faith cannot endure the tests thus applied, of course it cannot endure. Let us look briefly at the result of the effort in all these ways. The first is the way of the world-view.

The modernist will often tell you frankly that his "world-view" is his controlling idea. His theory of the universe precludes the acceptance of the supernatural elements in the New Testament. My answer to this position in *Christianity at the Crossroads* is twofold: first, it is a reversion to medievalism to judge facts by world-views; and second, world-views or philosophies do not yield a satisfactory basis for religion.

As to the first point, world-views must conform to facts, not facts to world-views. This insistence is where the modern man is greatly in advance of the medieval man. It is strange that modernists insist upon a medieval point of view to sustain modernism. One of the chief fruits of modern science and Christianity is the demand that facts come first. Get your facts first of all, then build your world-views.

The second point in the reply is that world-views, or philosophies, do not afford a satisfactory basis for religion. Philosophies are weak or strong according to their assumptions. But they vary as the colors of an evening cloud. Each rational system, from its own stand-

point, destroys all the others. Philosophies mutually devour each other. A gifted Munchausen told of a fight between two snakes. They mutually and reciprocally swallowed each other by the tail until suddenly both vanished from view. Philosophies almost do that with each other, especially when they are not grounded in solid facts. Christian philosophy is based upon the historic facts of the New Testament and the facts of religious experience.

The second is the way of physical science. It is held that physical science proves the uniformity of nature and thus disproves the miracle. In other words, physical science applies the basis for the world-view already mentioned. Miracles which are treated as violations of nature's laws are, therefore, impossible. The resurrection of Jesus could not have taken place. The reply is that a world-view should rest upon all the facts including will, freedom and personality as well as physical law. These are in perfect harmony with law. The miracle is not a "violation" of nature's laws. It is God's will working for a beneficent end. Both will and law are necessary to explain the universe. A man arguing against miracle defied his friend, who was whittling, to set aside the law of gravitation if he relaxed his grasp upon the knife. The whittler flipped the knife upward, and it stuck in the ceiling. The law of gravitation was not violated or suspended. Another force was introduced—will, freedom, personality.

The third way of setting aside the facts is historical criticism. The reply is that the modern critical movement leaves the essential features of the New Testament records intact; that the criticism which destroys the records divides into several mutually contradictory theories;

that none of them deals adequately with the earliest documents, Paul's earlier epistles; that many parts of the records rejected are supported as strongly as other parts which are accepted by the critics; and that destructive critical theories grow out of world-views and are not based upon the science of criticism itself.

The fourth way is comparative religion. It is alleged that Christianity is an echo of the ethnic faiths of surrounding countries. The reply is that while there are some common terms employed by Christianity and the ethnic faiths, the alleged parallels are not made out. Judaism accounts for most of them. Others are purely fanciful and arbitrary. Besides this the doctrines accorded by objectors to the ethnic faiths are found not only in the late, but in the earliest of the Christian records.

I have discussed facts rather than doctrines, not from lack of appreciation of doctrines, but because the Christian facts preceded the doctrines, and gave rise to the doctrines. The facts are primary. Abolish all the doctrines, if you will, and begin with the facts, and the essentials of doctrine would come back. The current issue, then, is not primarily an issue about doctrines. It is an issue about facts.

The open secret of the New Testament is that the Christ who was crucified, and raised from the dead, and who ascended to the Father, is the Creator of Christianity. The Acts and Epistles tell the story everywhere. The word "began" in Acts 1: 1 is the turning point, the watershed's dividing line between schools of thought. Jesus began to work in the Gospels and continued in the Acts and Epistles. So we evangelicals believe. Modernists affirm that he began in the Gospels but that he does

not continue to act in history except through his ethical teachings and influence. The apostles chose a man to succeed Judas because he was a witness to the resurrection. Peter and Paul's preaching in Acts turns upon the resurrection. The Epistles throb with the resurrection power. Christianity without it is as powerless as an electric machine with the current cut off. Modernism soft-pedals or denies the resurrection. It thus changes the nature of the religion of the New Testament.

You cannot leave out the supernatural and keep the Christian religion. Evangelicals insist upon keeping the Christian causes linked with the effects to be produced. The modernist who imagines he can devise a workable Christianity out of ethical ideals alone is as naive as a certain unsophisticated farmer who wanted an engineer to build him a pump to irrigate ten thousand acres. When asked what power he would use to drive the pump he replied, "I am able to pay for a pump big enough to generate its own power." Christianity is at the cross-roads, but it is not likely to imitate this farmer. If the thirsty world is to be supplied with the Water of Life, there must be power behind the pump.



### III

#### FAITH AND SCIENCE



### III

#### FAITH AND SCIENCE

But, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.—*1 Cor. 2: 9.*

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things *are* possible to him that believeth.—*Mark 9: 23.*

Both these texts show the contrast between the testimony of the senses and the discoveries of faith. Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard—but faith penetrates beyond sense and discovers new worlds.

I had the pleasure recently of hearing an address by a scientific man on the subject, "Scientific Prophecy." It was an exceedingly interesting forecast of the possible course of scientific achievement. Many things were foretold bearing upon human welfare. Among them were the chemical production of food in various forms, the cheapening of light and power for mechanical and other purposes, the conquest of cancer and other diseases, the increase of speed limits on land and sea and in the air, the possibility of intercommunication between the planets of our solar system. These and other possible advances in knowledge and powers were confidently affirmed.

These prophecies were based upon past achievements. The speaker reminded us of the slowness of man to believe in the possibilities of the past which later became established facts. Wise men said yellow fever and diphtheria would never be mastered. In earlier days the

electric telegraph seemed an absurd hope. The idea of the navigation of the air was ridiculed as among the wild-est dreams of the crack-brained. The telephone and wireless were inconceivable. One prophet said some years ago that science was already full grown; no genuinely new force would be discovered. And yet man went on discovering new laws and new forces. Soon the X-ray and the radio came to light. Today science is more eager and alert and purposeful than ever. She is on tiptoe, as it were, for new revelations in the great reservoir of nature.

All along the way it has been a conflict between sense and faith. Eye saw not, ear heard not, and men doubted. But men of faith went on searching. Pasteur made his great discoveries, and the germ theory revolutionized medicine. The diphtheria antitoxin was produced, the millions of children were saved from death. The mosquito was detected in his deadly work of transferring the yellow fever germ, and that dread scourge was tamed.

The truth has gradually emerged that the universe about us is an inexhaustible storehouse of forces, of laws, of gifts from God to man awaiting his discovery. It abounds in hidden fountains of power, cataracts of energy, lakes and oceans of divine blessing, which challenge us to our highest skill. But these things do not at first appear to the senses. Eye hath not seen them, ear hath not heard them—until scientific research uncovers them. And then suddenly they burst upon the eyes in dazzling splendor, or reverberate upon the ears like a great cataract plunging over a precipice.

In this way men gradually come to see that science and religion are in full agreement in their basic attitudes and instincts. Both work by faith. Both have large capac-

ity for belief. Both learn by experience that doubt paralyzes while faith stimulates. Doubt, of course, has its place as a means towards the discovery of truth. It protects against illusion and credulity and self-deception. But doubt by itself tends to paralyze, while faith is a very sharp spur to effort. The true wisdom dictates not that we should believe as little but as much as possible. What the eye does not see and the ear does not hear may, nevertheless, be awaiting us on the other side of the veil of sense, clad in radiant garments and literally burdened with gifts and blessings for us. There are some very important truths which grow out of the contrast between faith and sight. I name a few of them.

The first is that the human mind and the universe around us are made for each other. They match each other as the glove matches the hand for which it is made. The unseen, unheard, unsuspected facts and forces are all about us. The mind of man is like a photographic plate. When exposed to these facts and forces and the right focus is attained, it registers them. Another intelligence, like our own, seems clearly to have made the world about us. It communicates to us its own truths. Every new fact and law we discover is a fresh proof of the presence of a greater mind than ours speaking to us through the things that are made. The music of the orchestra is not music to any except those who have a musical faculty. It is mere noise to some animals who are offended by it. The leader may be hidden from the audience behind a screen. But the players on the instruments see his actions and through them he impresses his mind upon the hearers. God is the hidden leader of the great orchestra of nature. The outreaching of our finite minds for all knowledge is but the reflection in us of the mind of the infinite.

Surely that which made us meant us to be mightier by and by,  
Set the sphere of all the boundless heavens within the human  
eye,  
Sent the shadow of himself, the boundless through the human  
soul,  
Boundless inward in the atom, boundless outward in the whole.

Take one recent example of nature's response to man's waiting mind in its striving to see the invisible and to hear the inaudible. As men studied the lines of the solar spectrum they saw a new strange color. This led to the discovery of a new gas, called helium, which is merely the Greek word for the sun transferred to English. The next step was to discover this gas among the other gases of the earth. Then it was discovered that helium will not burn. And so it became a substitute for the highly inflammable hydrogen in the great dirigibles for navigating the air. Twenty thousand dollars' worth of hydrogen was wasted in order to introduce helium into the Z R-3 when it arrived from Germany, in order to make it safe from explosion and to protect the lives of the airmen. Surely this was an instance of hitching not our wagon but our balloon to a star.

Thus man's faith is rewarded. The great deep of God's mind answers the great deep of the human mind. Man's faith never loses its reward when wisely directed, because the same Being made the universe and the mind which grasps it.

A second truth growing out of the contrast between faith and sight is that the world about us is far richer in meaning than we have imagined. Just as men have been incredulous as to steam and electricity and other forms of power in the past, so also, although in a less degree, they are incredulous today. That which keeps

the world back is not faith, but doubt. It is the pioneering mind which makes the great discovery. The friends of Columbus warned him that his ships would come to the jumping-off place and plunge to destruction in a bottomless abyss. Doubt would have paralyzed the effort, but faith led Columbus to the discovery of a new world. Faith refuses to measure the future by the past, although a wise faith always respects the past. Doubt can achieve what others have achieved in a measurable degree. Faith can achieve the impossible.

Now, faith knows no limit to what it may discover in the spiritual universe. Just as the mind of man is made for nature, so also the soul of man is made for God. When men call, God answers in Christ. "In him," says Paul, "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The spiritual faculty which we call faith joins us to God. Out of faith springs love, and love is the great revealer of spiritual riches. Paul prays for the Ephesians: "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge that ye might be filled, even to all the fulness of God." As Professor Moffatt's translation of this passage suggests, the meaning is that if men wished to get a conception of "length," if they desired some adequate idea of "breadth," of "height" and "depth," they were to let Christ dwell in their hearts by faith, and thus become rooted and grounded in love.

In the third place, I remark that the more refined the forms of matter, the more significant they are. Science is trying to find the ultimate constitution of things, the bricks, as it were, out of which the universe is built. Once

we heard much of atoms. Now we hear much of electrons or some other minute forms of existence. These are like little solar systems each with central nucleus and infinitessimally small particles revolving about it. And we are actually told that in comparison with their magnitude the relative distance between an electron and its central nucleus is greater than that between the earth and the sun. Thus scientific faith penetrates ever more deeply into the unseen and unheard universe. We are impressed with the fact that these refined forms of matter seem to lead us up ever closer and closer to God, the source and origin of all things.

Where the origin of life is present the mystery and beauty as well as the reality of the invisible are even more impressive. Some one watched through a powerful microscope the slow incubation of the egg of a fish under the heat of the sun, and described what he saw. He said it was as if the invisible fingers of a painter were at work with a brush. He sketched in first of all in very dim outline the shape that was to appear. Then came heavier strokes. With careful precision the details were perfected, and at length the organism was complete.

And so we come in our careful study of physical nature to the spiritual vision. Science leads us up almost to the gates of paradise. If we listen we can hear the song of the angels on the other side of the walls of sense. Delving down into matter, tunneling out into the secret places of the physical, science comes right up to the gates of the new Jerusalem, with its streets of gold and pearly gates. But it takes eyes adjusted to the spiritual vision to see the heavenly city, and ears attuned to heavenly music to hear the halleluiahs within.

In the fourth place, I think the contrast between faith and sight supplies a clew for the understanding of God's method with man. Here we are imprisoned upon a little planet, and surrounded by a universe so vast that it staggers the imagination even to attempt to grasp it. And yet this vastness awakens a true echo in man. The measureless distances and magnitudes stir something in man akin to themselves. He finds himself reaching out in desire and thought that he may fully know the meaning of it all, that he may master these forces which play around him. Manifold and complex as these natural laws and forces are, they lure man's spirit on and on to the very frontiers of being. In all his struggles he is rewarded with new discoveries which in turn whet his insatiable appetite, and thus his nature comes to its own true destiny under a law of endless growth.

Not only are we imprisoned upon a little planet, we are also imprisoned in bodies which are limited in many ways. We are forever tossed about between our sense life and our deep instincts for the eternal. Our dim vision, our dull hearing and our gross sense of feeling confine us in a little circle of experience which keeps us baffled and laboring under a sense of the futility of it all. And yet we never can rid ourselves of these deeper spiritual yearnings which tell us of that which is infinite and eternal in ourselves and which point to the infinite and eternal One whom we Christians have learned to call Father.

The meaning should be obvious to any thoughtful person. The vastness within man was meant to match the vastness around him. The fact that his mind and heart register the unseen and unheard realities about him as he gradually adjusts his nature to them is eloquent of

God's purpose in placing us in our earthly prison house. By his grace we are to grow in knowledge and power until we attain the stature of full-grown men. It is a curious fact that while materialism has ever tried to terrorize man's imagination by pointing to his littleness over against the greatness of the universe, man refuses to be cowed or terrified. He holds up his head amid the mighty framework of nature. He is conscious all the time that there is something in him greater than all things material. He groans and struggles amid his sufferings, but it is a groaning not as a victim of greater powers so much as the instinct of one destined for a larger life. His nature is too big for the world, not too little. It is not that he is crushed like a worm beneath the wagon wheel, but rather that he is wounded like an eagle trying to escape from confinement.

The mission of Jesus was to interpret God to man, and to enable us to understand our true relation to the infinite. His coming was the invisible God appearing under conditions of time and space in order to remove all doubt from our minds as to the reality of God and of his boundless love. His atoning death was the recognition of our need for redemption from sin and its power. His resurrection was the loosing of the flood tides of the infinite life upon humanity.

It is in order now to point out a few practical conclusions from what has been said.

One conclusion is, it would seem that scientific men ought to be the greatest of Christian believers. In their research work faith always runs ahead of knowledge. They make a guess, or have an intuition or surmise. They proceed to hunt for facts to verify and, by and by, they discover some new truth.

Another practical conclusion is that nothing is really explained until we find God behind the things we see. The world and life have no meaning unless God is guiding things. Science describes the world. Religion interprets it. Both are necessary. There is no conflict between them. A fact has little value until you interpret it. And only religious faith can interpret the world.

Finally, I remark that all things are possible to him that believeth. Scientific faith proves this and religious faith proves it.

Modern science has been called a great adventure. It is the greatest of human adventures save one. And in the adventure is mingled romance and magic. It is the storehouse of wonders. Nothing has brought more thrills to men than the discoveries of science. But if science is a great and thrilling adventure, religion is a greater. Faith in God brings even greater discoveries. Jesus said: "Become as a little child before God. Let your mind and conscience and will open to him. Let him speak to your soul and you will enter a new spiritual universe." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11: 28-30). In this there are four great truths: 1. Christ himself is the object of faith: "Come unto me." 2. We are to accept his authority in religion: "Take my yoke upon you." 3. He perfectly fulfils for us the religious ideal: "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." 4. Through him we come to a true knowledge of God: "and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

All that the spiritual life craves he brings: forgiveness

of sin and reconciliation with God, moral reenforcement for our feeble wills, a new sense of power to overcome temptation, gradual growth in the life of obedience and sanctification, a new joy in social service in sacrificial living and giving, a new vision of life and death and the future, a loss of the fear of death and assurance of immortality, the privilege of having a share in building God's great moral kingdom which shall cover the universe; and thus the kingdom of science and the kingdom of religion shall blend into one great kingdom.

The things which eye saw not and ear heard not in nature, but which scientific faith discovered, shall be joined to the things which eye saw not and ear heard not in the realm of religion, but which religious faith discovered—and the two shall be God's one great universal kingdom, eternal and unchangeable, save that it will forever expand to larger proportions and greater spiritual wealth and power.

IV

THE PEDIGREE OF LOVE



## IV

### THE PEDIGREE OF LOVE

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.—*1 John 4:7, 8.*

It is a pity we have not some special word for Christian love. There are so many degrees and forms of human love, the danger is that we shall confound them. This love ranges all the way from mere sensuous love, through mild friendship and neighborliness and brotherhood up to moral heroism and martyr devotion.

But John's epistle suggests a way of discriminating Christian love from other forms of it. That way is to trace its pedigree. My subject as suggested by the text is the Pedegree of Love, or the lineage of love. Last summer I met that wizard of the west, the man who has added millions upon millions of dollars per year to the corn crops of Iowa by his discoveries in corn culture. I asked for the secret of his success. His answer can be summed up in one word, pedigree. Select the best ears and the best grains of corn and propagate from that. Now we may apply this same principle to love, and when we have traced its lineage and followed back the family tree we may discover why it is the grace preeminent among the graces.

I. First, then, the lineage of love leads us back into the divine nature. "God is love." Love born in God.

Now when the Scriptures assert that God is this or that they always point out something necessary in the divine nature. Love, then, is essential in God. Without love he would not be God. Some have said that God's love depends on his will; that God must be just and holy, but that he can choose to love or not love. But this is incorrect. Love and law are both essential in God and equally so. One has said "God is love, and law is the way he loves us. God is law, and love is the way he rules us."

Love is self-communication. And as it is essential to God, it is necessary self-communication. To give himself, then, belongs to the very nature of God. There has never been a time when God did not love. His own Son was the eternal object of his love. His creatures, too, draw forth his affection, and it rolls out toward them like a mighty ocean.

Love prompted the incarnation of God in Christ. Men sometimes assert that to become incarnate is unworthy of God. But I reply that incarnation was necessary to God if it was necessary to the expression of love. For he cannot refuse to love. The incarnation is a proof of his infinite resourcefulness, in that it shows him equal to the occasion created by sin. It was the means for the rescue of man.

Love prompted the atonement of Christ. Men sometimes assert that there was no deep necessity which led to the atonement on the bloody Cross, and that Christ's death was simply a spectacle, God exhibiting his love in order to impress our hard hearts. But this is an erroneous view. What would you think of a man who, in order to impress his wayward son with his love, should say, "Come, my son, let me prove to you my love," and

should then thrust his hand into the fire until it was burned to a crisp? You would think little of such folly masquerading as love. Love does not seek the spectacular way. Love is genuine. The Cross was a necessity to the Redeemer. "He saved others, himself he cannot save," was a true word of his enemies. That garden experience proves that he was under some dire necessity, when he lifted the awful cup and shrank away three times before he gained his consent to drink it.

As I gaze, therefore, at the Cross of Christ I behold a love which took the initiative in salvation, which set out to seek and to save the lost; I see there a love which was called forth by nothing lovable in its objects but sprang spontaneously from God's nature, who must love because he is God; a love which is as patient as the eternal mountains and as deep as the fathomless sea; a love which waited and endured thousands of years before, and now two thousand years after importunes and lays siege at the heart of man; I see there a love which places an infinite value upon the soul of man, which counts no sacrifice too great to win him, and which never gives him up until he becomes hardened and hopelessly obdurate in moral character, and the last resource of love has been exhausted.

This then is the pedigree of love. Its quality is not understood until it is seen to be of the very essence of God to give himself in order to bless others. God is the Father of love. Christ started a new spiritual heredity. He was firstborn among many brethren.

II. We note next how love with such a lineage deals with its own creation.

The answer may be summed up thus: Such love on God's part will lead him to communicate his own best to

his creatures and require their own best from them. This key will unlock a thousand mysteries. This is the summary, the concise and comprehensive statement of all the movement of Providence. It is the meaning of the gospel: To give his best and to call out our best.

I have read of a peasant girl singing in the fields her glad, spontaneous song among her friends, but with no listening ear appreciative enough to discern the rare notes of power. One day a stranger heard her sing and said, "There is one of God's own human songbirds." He took her away to the great city and trained her until the whole world learned to come and listen to her voice.

Now God is always listening for our best and seeking to develop it in us. Who has not been made sad at the thought of the men and women who never find themselves, who live and die without knowing what they might have been? We easily catch the mood of the "Elegy in the Country Church Yard":

Perhaps in this sequestered spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Some hand the rod of empire might have swayed  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

All history is God's effort to do this. Browning caught the truth in his poem, "Saul," where he described David as playing his harp in order to drive away the evil spirit from King Saul. He appeals to many things in Saul, the memory of childhood, friendship, war, love, which will conquer the evil in men and bring out their best.

Now this principle of giving his best and calling out our best is the key to God's dealing with sin. There are three ways of dealing with sin. One is to ignore it, call it by a euphonious name, explain it away, treat it leniently.

That is the way of so-called Christian Science, and of a certain type of philosophy. Another way is the legal and judicial way which says punish sin, let law and judgment and penalty take their course. But love's way is different. Love says do not ignore sin, do not make the sinner hopeless by threats of judgment and wrath alone. But grapple with sin, cast it out, cure it. That was Christ's way, and he came close to sinners for that purpose.

My long struggle with sin is discouraging. The same old temptation, same old weakness and the same old weary round of effort for years—how discouraging! Yes, that is one side. But there is another. That long struggle tells me of the sleeplessness, the jealousy, the everlasting importunity of God's love in my heart. He will not let me go.

The same is true of pain. God permits pain in order to bring out our best and impart his own best. Character is better than comfort. There are two ways of looking at suffering. Men usually think of it as a reaping of sins sown in the past, and so it is at times. But it may also be a sowing. I hold in my hand a grain of wheat. Its best slumbers silent at its heart. Only by an effort of the imagination can I call up the picture of the stately stalk bowing its head with its burden of wheat. I must plant the grain in order to bring out its best. Pain is a grain of wheat planted in us from which the harvest will come. Pain is not only a reaping; it is also a sowing. Love is at work on us seeking to bring out our best.

There are riddles, of course, in the methods of love. But slowly they disappear. Men used to say that nature was all dark and everywhere "red in tooth and claw with raven." Now they see it otherwise. There are gleams of light in the animal world. The antelope hiding her

young in the cactus thicket where the wolves cannot reach it, the Mexican thrush flying into the open mouth of the venomous snake about to seize her young; the lioness rending and tearing the foe that would harm her cubs. Here is the glory of motherhood gleaming out like a star of hope against the dark background of fierce animal life. The principle of sacrifice finds illustration thus in the ferocious and bloody lines of the lower animals dimly prophetic of the day when the eternal himself shall stand forth in moral splendor tabernacling in human flesh and proving that God is love.

There will remain some mystery in love, because love cannot reveal its best to us or our best to ourselves all at once. But to deny love because there is mystery in it is to refuse to enjoy the beauty of a mountain vista because there is a haze at the end of it; to decline to admire the iridescent beauty of the ocean's surface when sun and wind combine to stir and gild its waves, because you cannot see to the bottom; or like closing the eyes to the glory of the constellations on a clear summer night because there are myriads of them in the background beyond the human ken.

As it is better for the rain to come in showers and at suitable intervals than in a deluge; as it is better for the ocean to deliver its tribute to the shore one wave at a time than to roll in all at once, so it is better for Providence to open our lives in a succession of vistas with reserves in the background than to send the deluge of blessings all at once.

The mystery of love is the reserve of the divine riches. The reticence of love is the preparation of the grand oratorios wherewith love shall break its silence in time to come. The mystery of love is the treasure house of the

divine surprises and apocalypses. The heaven of brass which now seems to thwart our prayers is the heaven which shall part asunder and let down the New Jerusalem of our hopes.

III. We come next to consider the reproduction of God's love in our own character and conduct. John uses a word in my text which reveals the pedigree of love. The true lover is begotten of God. John uses a word for "sons" of God different from that used by Paul. It means partaking of his nature. Sons of God are those who reproduce God's love. Where God stamps his own love on his creation you have a reproduction of what you see on the Cross of Christ, love dying for the common good.

You may see this in physical creation. The electric light which blazes in the darkness yonder, whence came it? From the current in the wire and from the dynamo. Whence comes the energy of the dynamo? From the coal. The coal came from the mine and is made up of vegetable matter matured ages ago by sunlight and buried in the earth. The electric light then is transformed energy of the sun. To this you might apply Paul's words about the sacrifice of Christ in Philippians, "Being in the form of sunshine it counted it not a thing," etc. The Cross is the ground plan of the physical universe.

Now when love in us is consistent with its lineage and lives up to its pedigree, it reproduces the family traits. I name four of those traits: 1. The first is freedom. Christ desires obedience and commands obedience. Before Christ obedience came in only one way, and that was by compulsion. The law made men obey. The flaming sword of authority was brandished before man or anathemas of wrath were hurled at them. Constraint and compulsion compelled obedience. The glory of

Christ is that he made men free and then commanded them to obey. He entrusted obedience to love.

2. Another quality of love is forgiveness. It is the power of persons to adjust themselves one to another where sin mars the harmony of personal relationship. Resentment is vulgar. The desire to "get even" with those who harm us, to wreak vengeance on those who sin against us, is contrary to the very genius of love.

He drew a circle that shut me out—  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.  
But love and I had the wit to win,  
We drew a circle that took him in.

3. The third quality in this love of the divine lineage is sympathy. This is a marked feature of divine love. The capacity to pass into other lives and identify oneself with them. A woman sympathized with the sufferings of horses. She wrote a book entitled *Black Beauty*, in which she passes down from the human plane and thinks and feels and speaks for the dumb but noble creature which is so useful a servant to man. Now her ability to do this was the result of her capacity to sympathize with God. She had passed upward first, then downward and outward. Her love had the mark of the true pedigree.

4. The fourth trait of love with the divine lineage is service. God's love comes a long way, even from the infinite heights, but when it reaches the earth it begins at once to perform useful work. The sunbeam travels more than ninety millions of miles, but it undertakes immediately to paint flowers and warm vegetation and scatter man's darkness. Such is love. It always wears the napkin of service about its loins. This love is not

emotion or sentiment merely. It is character. It accepts Burns' sentiment,

Then gently scan your brother man.

But it goes further. It seeks men. Its ruling passion is humanity. Before Christ men used to travel for pleasure, for business, or to make war. He set men to traveling out of sheer love to men in order to bless them. The missionary became a new human type. Paul became thus the spiritual progenitor of Europe.

But can a man "love to order"? A friend of mine described a native of some savage tribe whom he saw at the Chicago world's fair and dwelt upon his repulsive appearance, and remarked, "If I were to live 10,000 years perhaps I might learn to love that creature." But here God's insight is necessary. To see the best in others and not the exterior alone is to reproduce God's love. The sculptor sees beauty in the block of marble, not because of its rough exterior, but because of what he knows his chisel and his will can make of it.

The Apostle Paul was a sculptor of human marble. Men complain that he had little appreciation of the beauties of nature, because his illustrations are drawn chiefly from human life. But this was not due to any lack of appreciation of the purple glories of the sunset cloud, or the fiery beauty of autumnal foliage, or the power and majesty of rolling billows—it was because he was absorbed in man—he was a sculptor of humanity. Man was his block of marble, and love with the divine pedigree kept the fuel piled high in the flame of his devotion until his life burned itself out in service.

This, then, is the pedigree of love. It rises in the eternal depths of God's heart. It flows out as spontaneously as

sunlight emanates from the sun. It is infinitely patient, infinitely tender, infinitely wise in its guidance and training of the race. It falls into human character and is there reproduced. When thus reproduced it creates a type of beauty unequaled in all the moral realm. Other loves are to this love with the divine pedigree as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine. It droppeth down as the gentle dew from heaven, but becomes as mighty and resistless as the ocean's tide. It is the principle of gravitation which binds the moral universe together, and is slowly drawing men and women from their wayward careers back into their true orbits around God. Yield yourself to it and all possibilities of power and of blessedness are yours.

V

KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD



# V

## KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD

And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.—*Rev. 1: 6.*

The ideas of king and priest could not be combined in the Old Testament. A king could not act as priest, nor a priest as king; but in the New Testament Jesus unites the two ideas in the same character.

Now kingship stands for power, dominion, glory. Every form of power is a kingly element of life. Priesthood stands for fellowship between man and God, and between man and man. Priesthood represents the sympathetic, the patient, the long-suffering, the helpful, in man's relation to man. Kings in the old sense of autocrats ruling by arbitrary will are anachronisms.

God said: I am tired of kings,  
I suffer them no more.  
Up to my ears each morning brings  
The outrage of the poor.

But the kingly element in life remains. It was never greater than it is today.

Priests in the old sense of custodians of divine grace and salvation, monopolizing the privilege of approaching God, are an anachronism in modern life. Yet the priestly element of sympathy, of patience, of fellowship and service was never so much needed as it is today.

Human progress, or civilization, or true culture in its complete sense has been the result of the union in due proportion of the kingly and priestly elements in life. Human failure has been the failure to see the relation between the two. The kingly has ignored the priestly, or the priestly has ignored the kingly. The race of man has slowly spelled out its sentences of light, word by word, and often at fearful cost in pain and sacrifice.

Let us apply this truth in some of the ways which the modern world requires, and see how it contains the clew to the maze in which the world seems to walk. We shall see that, distracted as mankind is, here is a gleam which we may follow to an era of higher and better things.

First, consider this truth in the realm of personal life, or as we say, the development of personality. Here we need the two elements, the kingly and priestly. We talk much of the self, and two groups of words compounded with self represent the two elements. Self-emptying, self-denial, self-sacrifice, stand for the priestly side. Self-discipline, self-direction, self-development, belong to the kingly. But character never comes to self-realization until both elements enter. A young man or woman has the priestly impulse to love and service, but fails to appreciate the kingly attainments that must go with it. The young preacher is ready to be "laid upon the altar," but may fail to consider whether there is anything of value in the thing so laid. Self-development is essential if self-sacrifice is worth anything. If a man is drowning and a swimmer risks his life to rescue him, the rescued man would be very grateful if the self-sacrifice of the would-be-rescuer had been preceded by a great deal of self-development. A man must win a certain degree of kingship before his sacrifice can bear fruit.

Paracelsus, you remember, set out to explore life. He compared himself to a pearl diver in whose life there are two supreme moments—first, when, a pauper, he stands ready to plunge into the sea, and second, when, a prince, he rises with his pearl. What was his experience? The pearl he sought was power. He found it. He sought the kingly element and it came to him as a result of his seeking. But it did not satisfy, as he confessed. It was because he omitted love, the priestly factor. "I gazed on power," he says, "till I grew blind. I could not take my eyes from that." What, then, is the use of power? It is to set love free. What, then, is the use of love? It is to give to power its true direction. A man finds himself, comes to himself, realizes himself just in proportion as he becomes a king in the elements of power and a priest in the use of power. One man doubts himself, his possibilities, and remains a dwarf, it may be with priestly impulses to bless. Another becomes a king in power, but remains stunted in altruistic impulse. It is in the union of the two elements that the ideal is realized.

Again, let us apply the principle to the sphere of citizenship. A few years ago a series of articles appeared in one of our religious papers entitled "Letters to a King." They were on the subject of citizenship, and addressed to a young man just arrived at the age of twenty-one. They emphasized the truth that the American is a sovereign. He is one of the sovereign people. The ballot is his scepter. He is a true king. The writer tried to impress on the young man his kingly function. He warned against a lazy kingship which lacked energy to think out political duty; against partisan kingship which worshiped blindly at a party shrine; against a materialistic kingship which thought of the ballot merely as a means of gain;

against a blind kingship which allowed a boss to usurp the king's own place.

But he is also a priest. I always have felt that the first series should have been followed by another entitled "Letters to a Priest."

We may apply our principle also in the realm of education. The great apostles and reformers in education have usually approached the subject on the priestly side. Herbart, and Troebel, and Pestalozzi were men who appreciated the individual, who sought to develop personality. They were men, first of all, of sympathy. How to set the mind free, and the individual could discover and realize the self. Our more recent emphasis has sometimes been on the kingly side. Science has introduced us to new and vast oceans of power. The reservoirs of nature are being tapped in a thousand ways. But are we learning as priests of nature and humanity to guide power to its true ends of making it easier to live with our fellows? Are the kingly men of today also priestly men? Do those who tower highest among us in intellectual or financial power always remember that they are priests—that their true end is the service of humanity?

In our economic life we have developed great captains of industry. Men have learned to guide and combine the great currents of trade and finance. They have amassed fabulous fortunes. Some of them are true servants, true priests of God and man. But too often the kingly power has been divorced from the priestly ideal. Alas, we have had the war profiteer with us, in spite of the holy ends for which America fought. Capital has matched its wits against labor, and labor has pitted its wits against capital. War among the classes has become one of the acute aspects of modern civilization. The outcome has not

been satisfactory. The logic of the clash of the kingly elements of life is seen in the extremes of our day. Radical social reformers wish to overthrow the present social order root and branch, because it produces giants who love to exploit their fellow men.

Sinbad, the sailor, was shipwrecked. You remember the giant he found on the island who ate a sailor every time he got hungry. Men point to the extreme of power in the industrial world and say it is Sinbad's giant over again. On the side of labor we have the I. W. W. and similar organizations at the other extreme. In both cases it is merely a form of the kingly element contending with another form. Where there has been improvement, it has been due to the union of the two. Progress is through mutual trust, respect, appreciation, recognition of rights, desire to perform duty. This is the great lesson of Christianity for us today. Jesus Christ has become king in millions of lives. But he won his kingship through priestly sacrifice. His kingdom was built on a cross.

The fundamental meaning of the Great War is that it was a clash between the kingly and the priestly elements in the conception of the state. Autocracy stands for the kingly, and democracy stands for the priestly element. Here are the two theories of the state: one says the citizen exists for the state; the other says the state exists for the citizen. The kingly ideal says the meaning of government is brute domination. The priestly ideal says the meaning of government is trusteeship. The kingly ideal was incarnated in the old German state. Its formula was: The Kaiser is the God-appointed ruler of Prussia; Prussia is the God-appointed ruler of Germany, and Germany is the God-appointed ruler of the world. The kingly ideal had its exponent in a Treitscke, a Nietzsche, a

Bernhardi. Its fundamental assumption is that weakness is the only possible sin of the state, and that the state knows no moral law. The corollary of this was a crushed Belgium, and nameless horrors on land and sea, including the sinking of the *Lusitania*.

The priestly ideal says the state is for the people. Man comes first, institutions come second. What the world wants and needs is not less of power, but more of sympathy. The kingly element of life must be supplemented by the priestly. Why did the Hague conferences and agreements prove so futile? The answer is not far to seek. When the nations sat around the conference table they wore their priestly vestments. Brotherhood, humanity and sympathy were the professed ideals for all. But on the part of some the priestly robes were hypocritical robes. In the background there lurked the kingly theory of the state, in deadly contradiction to the ideals of the conference table. The result was that the Hague agreements became mere "scraps of paper."

We must have a regenerated theory of the state before the world can get far on the road to a permanent peace. International agreements come to little if based on contradictory doctrines of the function of government. America is a priestly nation. She points to the Spanish-American War, to Cuba, to her declared policy with the Philippines. Our entrance into the great World War had no sordid motive. The love of humanity, jealousy for human rights, sympathy with the oppressed, a sense of trusteeship for civilization—these were her animating motives, all priestly motives. She has abundant kingly power. America laid all her resources on the altar. But "no man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

**VI**

**THE RESPONSE OF JESUS CHRIST TO MODERN  
THOUGHT**



## VI

### THE RESPONSE OF JESUS CHRIST TO MODERN THOUGHT

The biological law is that organ and environment must correspond if life is to persist. The preacher must obey this law if his ministry is to be other than a voice crying in the wilderness of empty pews, or the echo of another voice which in some past age cried with power to living men.

Modern thought, the preacher's environment in part, is a very variable quantity. It is like the "borealis race that flits ere you can point its place." The young preacher is often bewildered by recent thought when he contemplates it in its modern, more modern, and most modern forms, in the many departments of man's rational activity, and in the endless variety of its manifestations. In particular is the young minister stirred to his depths by the fact that practically all lines of modern thought somehow or other run back into vital contact with his own sphere and function.

Not the least trying aspect of these forms of modern thought is their frequent contradictory character from the point of view of the preacher's own message to the world. It is very easy to illustrate this statement in many ways. For example, in the realm of the philosophy of religion, one form of modern idealism asserts that incarnation and atonement are universal principles of human and divine life, but at no time taking unique

form, as in the case of Jesus of Nazareth. Another form of modern idealism, as with Professor Eucken, insists on the new birth by divine power as man's only means of triumph and self-realization—but a new birth with which the historical Jesus has no necessary relation. Yet another idealist, Professor Royce, leaves the problem of Jesus wholly on one side and asserts that the Holy Spirit in the beloved community, the church, is the key to the meaning of the world. Modern idealism again, as represented by Bluett and Bowne, tells us that an unique incarnation and atonement, as in Jesus, are the sole means of interpreting a personal God in terms of love.

In the realm of the psychology of religion and from the point of view of Christian experience, the same variety arises in the views expressed. To one modern, as in the case of Hoffding, religious experience is a merely subjective play of the emotions; to Professor James it is a birth from above, a supernatural life supervening upon a dying to sin and self, but the supernatural power remains unknown. Jesus cannot be claimed as its author. Another modern, who shaped his system expressly from the point of view of modern thought, Albrecht Ritschl, claims that the one thing certainly known to us is that one thing which, according to James, we cannot know, viz.: that the new life is mediated to us through Jesus Christ.

These examples could be indefinitely extended, but additional citations are not necessary. It is clear that the young minister who desires to make terms with modern thought has before him a complex and difficult problem, unless he can find some simple and straightforward method which will relieve the strain and stress of the many problems.

The dangers to him are very real. He may lose patience with all modern thought and fall back on the stereotyped forms of tradition, and lose touch with modern life; or he may be so impressed and absorbed by some modern criterion of truth that he will lose contact with the gospel itself; or else he may become so weakened in conviction as to the truth of his message that the note of spiritual authority will die out of it entirely. These are real dangers, but there is an alternative to all of them. He may squarely face his task and seek to meet honestly the issues presented, and find himself in the freedom of a world of great spiritual realities, in which not chaos and confusion reign, but order and beauty. He, with his gospel, may thus become a loyal and self-respecting citizen in the modern kingdom of the Spirit.

It is, of course, true that Jesus spoke no direct word concerning modern thought and its problems, so far as the new Testament records go. And yet he has a response which is only the more impressive and satisfying because it is indirect. For the minister of the gospel today it is a task and obligation of the greatest moment to find, if possible, what it is that Jesus says to meet these great issues and answer these great needs. No task could well be more fascinating in itself or fraught with graver issues for the welfare of mankind. For men will perish from lack of spiritual food unless the ministry can truly find itself in the modern world and can bring to men a satisfying message.

The answer of Jesus to modern thought,—clear, forceful, convincing—is found in what he said, in what he was, and in what he did: his gospel, his incarnation and his atoning work.

His response to modern thought, then, may be gathered up in the following statements:

1. In his assertion of the autonomy and independence of religion, Jesus thereby declares the freedom and autonomy of all forms of human culture. The modern world is quite familiar with the ideal of freedom and autonomy in the realm of science and philosophy. The gospel of Jesus carries that ideal as an implicit teaching at its very heart. But the truth which has too often been forgotten in more recent thought is the freedom and autonomy of religion itself. Religion interpreted in its own legitimate terms, religion as the direct approach of the soul to God, religion as the satisfaction of man's craving for the eternal, for redemption and moral perfection, religion as the freedom of the spirit of man in his supreme relation—this is the assertion of Jesus.

Jesus says to us: All the great values and satisfactions have their place. Science observes nature and formulates her laws. She applies the principle of causality. Philosophy builds its systems on the data supplied by science. She works with the principle of rationality. Religion seeks blessedness and peace in an ethical and spiritual redemption. She works with the principle of personality. These provinces in the kingdom of the Spirit have engaged in many wars with each other because one or another of them has not been content to be a province, and has sought rather to be the kingdom itself. Discord and strife arise when one value, need, satisfaction claims to rule in all realms. Physical science finds nature replete with power. But when a philosopher of religion, as was recently done, seeks to define religion as the recognition of an impersonal power outside ourselves and the effort to adjust ourselves to it, he simply ignores the

characteristic element in religion in the interest of a characteristic element in physical science. A man learning to walk on stilts, an aeroplanist balancing in the clouds, a herd of buffalo fleeing before a prairie fire, fulfil the requirements of the definition. An impersonal object is a non-religious object. Religion has no meaning save as fellowship between the divine and human persons. Jesus made valid forever the autonomy and independence of religion, which brings its own credentials, submits to no alien power, and refuses to be explained away by any subtle process of reasoning.

2. Again, the response of Jesus to modern thought is seen in his creation of a world of spiritual realities which meets the modern demand for reality in all spheres. The love of reality is a scientific passion. Jesus has made it a religious passion. Make-believes in the spiritual sphere must all go. Neither God nor man can endure them. Jesus has made the spiritual universe real. Men were saying a few years ago: See how the physical universe has been extended into an infinitude of past time. See its magnitudes and illimitable reaches in space. Man is dwarfed. He has taken himself too seriously by much. Let him cower and tremble in the presence of these vast forces. Yet man has not cowered and trembled. He has dared to face the aeons and the systems and the cosmic magnitudes with the unquenchable conviction that he is greater than any physical force, than all physical forces. Neither the microscope nor the telescope has found anything in the universe so significant, so startling, so wonderful as man himself. But this is due to the fact that Jesus had created the spiritual universe and set man in its context. He has kept alive the spiritual realities which feed the soul, and without him and his

revelation man would have been crushed by the terrific assault of materialism. For a great host of men and women the spiritual universe is more real than rocks and trees, than the round ocean or the living air or the starry heavens, because Jesus has made it so.

3. The answer of Jesus to modern thought is found further in the central meaning of the spiritual world he has made real. The score of that world of reality is God, the Father. God became a historic fact in Jesus. This met the ancient and it meets the modern need. Men cannot feed on abstractions about God, as a vine cannot climb a moonbeam, as a tree cannot root itself in a fog bank. Philosophy was in unstable equilibrium. It is yet in unstable equilibrium, so that a modern pessimist has said philosophy is the search of a blind man in a dark room for a black cat which is not there. I do not agree with this. Jesus puts philosophy on the clew. We know Noumenal reality through him. The idea of a first cause leaves you cold. The idea of a first cause with a purpose interests you a little. The idea of a first cause with a purpose who cares for men warms the heart. The idea of a purposive first cause who cares and who individualizes us and numbers the hairs of our heads wakes us into glad song, and when we learn that this great loving, purposive, individualizing omnipotence is our Father who folds us to his bosom, then all the joy bells of the heart begin to ring. And when this rounded and glorious thought of God, which embodies the partial results of all higher speculation and experience into a new and living unity—when this round and glorious conception is taken out of the realm of mere thought and made living in the redemptive experience in man's inner life, new power and new hope are born. The heart now dares to climb and

soar, and man discovers that the spiritual universe matches his spiritual nature as the physical answers to his intellect.

The true function of the preacher is to make God real to men. Unless his ministry does this, it comes short. There is no road to this power save by self-discipline into a constant realization of the spiritual realities which Jesus has brought near. It is this that makes the religion of Jesus impregnable against attack. It is eternity made real for men in time. It is the infinite thrust down into the finite world. It is the supreme reality unveiled to an age taught by science to hate make-believes and shams.

4. The response of Jesus to modern thought is seen further in the internal view he brings concerning God. "No one knoweth the Son save the Father, and no one knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him," said Jesus. "No one hath seen God. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," said John. This is the ontology of the gospel. What God is in himself we know through Jesus to this extent. Eternal love reigns in the Godhead. God is love. God might teach or enjoin love in a gospel without an incarnation. But only love incarnate could reveal that God is love. The essentiality of love in God could only appear in act. Otherwise, love might remain a mere relative term of accommodation to us with no corresponding reality in God. Hence, as Jesus said, the Cross is the glory of Christ and of God. It proved that the divine can stoop and suffer, and thus in a marvelous manner enlarges our conception of the infinite riches and fulness of the divine resources.

Now, all this revelation in and through the Son of God is the climax and goal, the satisfying answer to many phases of modern thought. You see it clearly, as follows: "Matter is the key to being," said materialism. "Mind is the key to matter," said idealism." "Personality is the key to mind," said personalism. "God is the key to personality, and love the key to the conception of God, and incarnation the key to love," said Jesus.

What, then, is the significance of this wonder-crowded physical universe which science has unveiled? It is the sphere for the adequate dramatization and evolution of holy love, the love essential in God, a love so vast that it requires an infinitude of time to unfold it and of space to display it, a love so high that nothing can express it save the ideas of Fatherhood and Sonship as these obtain in the divine nature itself. The necessity which reigns in nature is a necessity whose end and goal was freedom, as freedom appears in man, who is the end and goal of nature. The end and goal of freedom is Sonship and holy love from man to God in response to God's holy love. The psychic phenomena of man's universal religious life mark man's instinctive effort to realize his divinely prescribed destiny. The end of the cosmos thus becomes the manifestation of the sons of God. So that the cosmic process, as well as the processes of history and grace, is the gradual elaboration and outworking of the eternal holy love within the divine nature itself. Thus Jesus alone supplies a view which unifies the elements of reality, the fragments of human experience, which sheds a divine light upon the forward and backward path of man, and leaves him free with an absolute freedom to find himself and realize himself in all spheres of activity.

And the kingdom of God is the redemptive result and ethical and social goal of the whole movement.

Here, then, is the rock foundation on which the modern preacher in the modern world may found his message: the autonomy and independence of religion as constituted by Jesus; the reality of the spiritual universe brought near in and through Jesus; the reality of God as the center of that spiritual universe; the centrality and essentiality of holy love in the Godhead itself and wrought out in nature through the cosmic order, in history through the gradual development of a kingdom of holy love, and through grace in the incarnation, atonement and redemption of Jesus Christ.



VII

WHAT JESUS CHRIST WANTS MEN TO THINK  
OF HIM



## VII

### WHAT JESUS CHRIST WANTS MEN TO THINK OF HIM

"What think ye of Christ?"—*Matt. 22: 42.*

Some time ago a very intelligent citizen of Louisville who has been much troubled by recent religious and theological controversies requested me to preach on the theme, "What Does Christ Want Me to Think of Himself?" The gentleman said, "What I and many others would like to hear is a presentation from the New Testament itself of a statement of the claims which Jesus made for himself, especially as these claims appear in the Gospels. We are not interested in argument about Christ so much," said the gentleman, "as we are interested in knowing just what Jesus wants us to think regarding him." Said he, "Please present the subject as a physician would prescribe a remedy for a disease, on the assumption that the patient has full confidence in the competency of the physician to do so and was ready to take the remedy as prescribed." I said to my friend it would be a pleasure to preach on the subject, and I take this occasion to do so.

First of all, there are three sayings about Jesus which I wish to quote by way of introduction, all of which contain a real point. The first is this: "Jesus Christ was either God or not a good man." His sayings about himself are so stupendous that they must be regarded as the

fabrications of a fanatic or the falsehoods of an unscrupulous impostor unless they are true.

The second saying is, "It would take a Jesus to forge a Jesus." That is to say, nobody but a being possessing the qualifications which Jesus claimed could have conceived such a character.

A third saying is that "To imagine that ignorant peasants invented him is a greater miracle than to suppose that Jesus himself existed." The writers of the Gospels were not ignorant peasants, but they were surely not capable of inventing out of whole cloth so marvelous a character as Jesus Christ. Sometimes men have tried to find somebody else behind Jesus who was the author of Christianity. Some have said that Paul said we have as the ultimate result some character which corresponds to the gospel picture of Jesus, even on the assumption that he was an invention or creation of someone else. But the inventor or creator must himself have been equal to Jesus. It reminds one of the story about the man who heard the arguments pro and con on the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy. At the end he announced his conclusion. Said he, "I am fully convinced from the arguments that Shakespeare did not write the plays attributed to him. But I am equally persuaded that some other man named Shakespeare did write them." He had arrived at a Shakespeare in spite of himself. I next note some of the things which Jesus wants men to think of him.

First, he wanted men to accept him as the supreme teacher. One of the most remarkable things in his teaching is his departure from the method of the old prophets. The prophets invariably began their messages with a "Thus saith the Lord." In Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jere-

miah and all the rest this is the form with which they begin their prophecies. Everything was dependent upon a saying of the Lord. And the phrase has in our usage become a noun, when we demand that a man give a "thus saith the Lord" for his statement. Jesus, however, did not use the phrase. His form of statement was, "Ye have heard it said by them of old time" so and so, "but I say unto you." I give an instance or two. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill: but I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." Again, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you that ye resist not evil," etc. Again he says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." It is perfectly evident from these statements that Jesus was his own authority. He did not speak in the name of God but in the name of himself, while of course affirming repeatedly that he was in perfect harmony with God. It is this exceptional authority which Christ claims for himself which makes it impossible for us to class him with other men. He stands alone in the greatness of his claims as a teacher. And evidently he wants us to think of him as the supreme teacher of all time.

In the second place, Jesus wanted men to think of him as the revealer of God the Father. He wanted men to discover him, so to speak, as the revealer of God the Father. He had been living in the presence of the disciples a long time when he asked the question contained

in the text, "What think ye of Christ?" When Peter confessed him, saying, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus pronounced upon him the blessing. Peter's eyes were opened to see the marvel of Christ's character. And when Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," Jesus replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" And when the doubting Thomas was in the presence of the risen Christ, Jesus said, "Reach hither thy finger and touch my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side." Thomas was convinced and said, "My Lord and my God." To these men Jesus for a time was like an ordinary man except that he was an unusual teacher. Slowly he was transfigured before the disciples and reflected the divine image. You have seen a drop of dew hanging from a blade of grass before sunrise in the early morning. After the sun was risen you have seen the drop of dew transfigured into a little sun reflecting the rays of the great sun in the east. Such was the transformation of Jesus in the minds of the disciples when they made confession of his deity.

As the revealer of God, Jesus was the giver of eternal life. In John 17: 3 he says, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Thus he classifies himself with God. The knowledge of Christ and the knowledge of God are the same kind of knowledge. To know Christ is to know God, and truly to know God is to know Christ. Jesus affirmed elsewhere, as we shall see, that no one knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him.

Jesus forgave sin. He said to the paralytic, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." The Pharisees and scribes bit-

terly criticized him, saying only God can forgive sin. But Jesus, to prove his right to forgive sin, said to the man, "Take up thy bed and walk," and he was instantly healed. Jesus asserts the power and authority of God in forgiving sins.

He was not only the giver of eternal life and wanted men to accept him as such, but he was the transformer of the lives of those who came to him for salvation. They were regenerated by his grace and their characters were gradually transformed into his image. A sunbeam comes from the heavens and falls upon a mud puddle. It distills a drop of water from the mud puddle, leaving the impure behind and lifting the particles of water up to the clouds. And then the drop of water cleansed and purified falls upon the earth to refresh it and increase its life. Thus the power of Christ fell upon the sinful hearts of men and distilled out of them the sin and lifted them unto purity and power, transforming them into his own image and giving them back to mankind for their blessing.

It is said that charcoal and diamond are the same in their elements. But the charcoal must be acted upon by intense heat in order to make it into diamond. Jesus took Saul the persecutor, a piece of charcoal, and converted him into Paul the apostle. He made the charcoal into a diamond. He took Peter, who was as weak as water, a piece of charcoal, and converted him into diamond. He took S. H. Hadley, the drunken bum of Water Street, and touched his heart and life and transformed him from being a piece of charcoal into being a diamond. And so he has been affecting the very essence and impress of civilization by transforming character through Christian history.

Fellowship with him produces his likeness in us. "We all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are transformed into the same image from glory unto glory." Association with vice makes a man vicious. Association with virtue makes a man virtuous. And Jesus is the supreme virtue of the world. You remember the old stanza:

Vice is a monster of such frightful mien  
That to be hated needs but to be seen;  
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

I think I may paraphrase this verse and also render it in this form:

Virtue is an angel of such gracious mien  
That to be loved needs only to be seen.  
When seen full oft, familiar with her face,  
We first admire, then welcome, then embrace.

It is in both cases the law of association and fellowship that is in operation. Association with Christ remakes man into his image.

In the third place, Jesus Christ wants us to think of him as the object of our faith. Here we are on controverted ground. Many moderns want us to take Christ as our example of religious devotion and imitate his faith. Evangelical Christians, on the contrary, hold that Jesus is Saviour and Lord. By his death on the Cross he atoned for our sins. He is, as we have seen, the greatest of all teachers, but he is more than a religious example for us to imitate. He is also atoning Saviour. We may take his own words as the proof of these statements. In the eleventh chapter of Matthew, verses 25 to 30, we read as follows:

At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

This language of Jesus himself is as clear as the noon-day sun on the point as to how he wishes us to think of him. He is not merely the example of our faith, he is the object of our faith. He is the Saviour of our souls; he brings God's power to sinners. He invites all men burdened with sin to come unto him. Moreover, he affirms distinctly that he alone can reveal God to men. "No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him." I am not arguing to prove things in this sermon; I am merely setting forth what Jesus wants men to think of him. I might cite many other passages. For example, he says in one place, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." And again, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." And again, "He that believeth on the Son hath life." And in the great passage in the third chapter of John we read that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Surely there can be no doubt on this point. Jesus left no uncertainty as to his claims for himself and he wants men to think of him both as the divine Saviour and as the object of their faith.

In the fourth place, Jesus wants us to think of him as the conqueror of sin and death. I am not dwelling upon the atonement, although it is implied and taught throughout the New Testament. "He bore our sins in his own body on the tree," is Paul's language describing his death. "He gave his life as a ransom for many," is the language of Jesus himself.

He was born of the Virgin Mary. This also is a point of great controversy in modern times. Many hold that it is not necessary to believe in the Virgin Birth, that it is immaterial whether we think of Jesus as having had a human father and mother or that he was born of the Virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. But if Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, surely the fact cannot be unimportant. His supernatural birth emphasizes his divine origin, his apartness from men, his separation from sin, his power to redeem. Eternal life flows through him because he came from the eternal heights of God. A stream can rise no higher than its source. If Jesus was only a man, Christianity would not have in it the divine power. It is not a matter of indifference, therefore, whether he was born of a virgin or in the ordinary human way of birth. One might as well say it is immaterial what theory of wells a man may hold who is digging for an artesian well. "What matters it," he may say, "whether you maintain that the water comes from a pool a hundred feet below the surface of the ground, or flows from a mountain height in the distance, so long as you have water to drink?" But the answer is that no man will ever dig an artesian well if he stops at the pool a hundred feet below the surface. He must go down to a stream that flows from the mountain height, if the water is to bubble up from the

mouth of the well and flow abroad to irrigate the regions round about. In the other kind of well the water is taken up by a bucket or a pump. In the artesian well it flows by its own power in an abundant stream because it rises in the mountain height and is seeking its own level. Yes, the Virgin Birth is of vital moment as a fact of Christian history.

So also Jesus wants men to think of him as one who arose from the dead. He predicted his death and resurrection repeatedly. It was this which gave offense to Peter and the other disciples. Jesus knew the necessity laid upon him by God's plan and referred to this necessity and predicted that on the third day he would rise again from the dead. The prediction was gloriously fulfilled and the risen Jesus appeared in many ways to the disciples. The great Christian movement started on its world sweeping mission with his resurrection from the dead. Without the resurrection Christianity would have been a failure. It is impossible for us to leave out the resurrection and keep our Christianity. Jesus was the conqueror of sin and death and he wanted men to think of him as such.

Finally, Jesus wanted men to think of him as one who could demonstrate practically in the lives of his people his own claims to be Lord and Saviour. Jesus is his own best witness. He wins his own case in the hearts and lives of believers. He makes his power felt. Men know that he is what he claims to be by reason of what he does for them. Therefore, argument is not to be relied upon, but Jesus himself is the best proof of his claims. He himself said, "If any man willeth to do the will of my Father in heaven, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself."

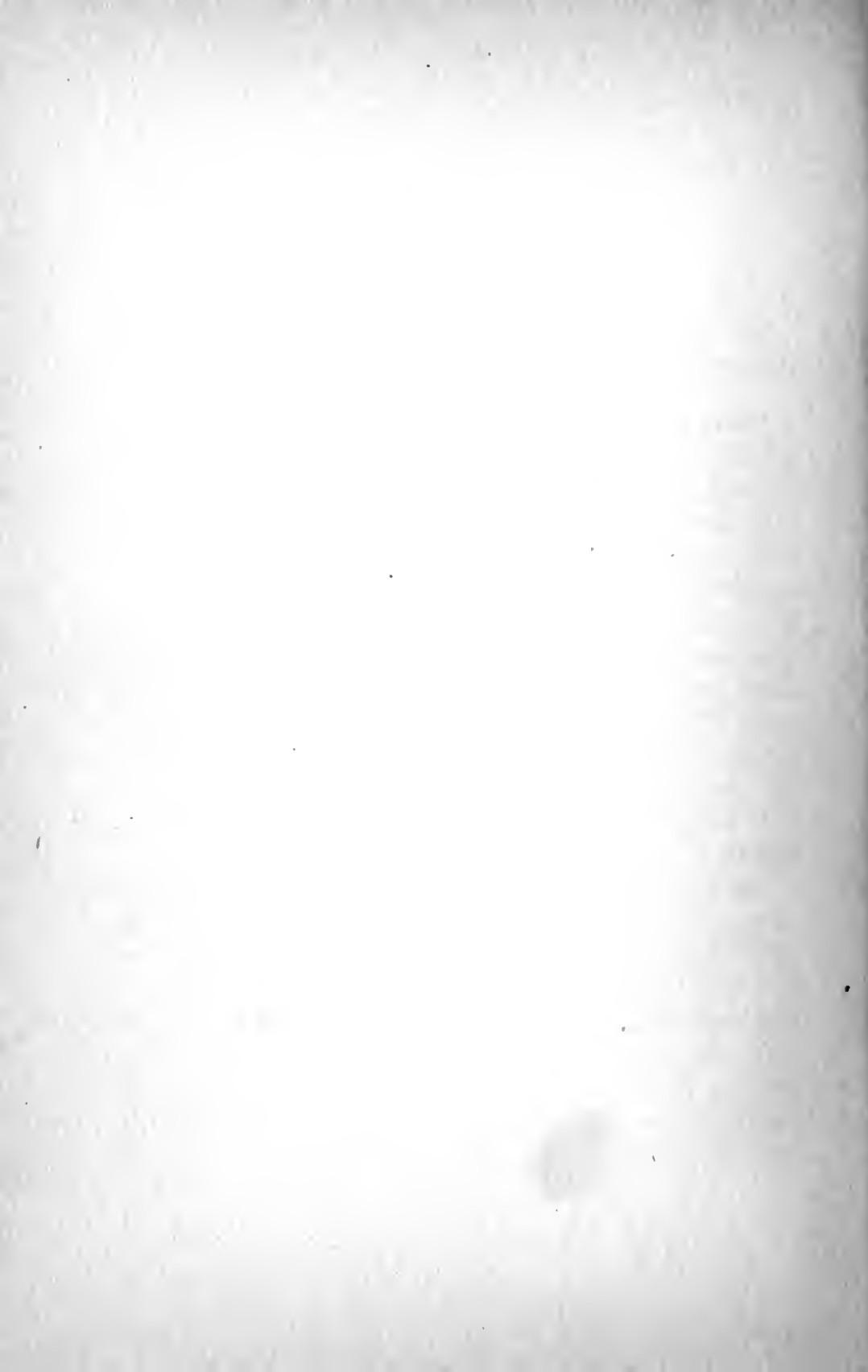
The evidence of the power of Jesus is like the evidence of sweet music. Suppose you should hear a great chorus trained by a master leader and possessing thoroughly trained voices. Suppose you should hear such a chorus sing Handel's "Messiah," and you should go away and say there was no music in it. Or perhaps you should hear Paderewski play one of his masterpieces on the piano and say there was no music in it. You would not be condemning the chorus or the player on the piano, but your own self. Jesus proves himself to the soul as music proves itself to the hearer. It needs no argument. It is self-evident.

The proof of what Christ can do is all summed up in the testimony of the man who said at a prayer meeting, "When I came down the street I heard a man say that this religion of Christ is a delusion. And I said to myself, 'blessed delusion.' Thank God for this delusion! Before it came into my life my wife and children went hungry and cold and barefoot, and my home was a little bit of hell. But this blessed delusion has put shoes on the feet of my children and bread in their mouths and clothes on their backs, and joy into the heart of my wife. It has changed my home from being a little bit of hell into being a little bit of heaven. It has given me victory over self and sin and despair. Thank God for the delusion. Would to God that all men had it."

What I have said, my friends, sums up in brief what Jesus wants men to think of him. Of course, I have left out many things, but I have tried to touch upon the vital things. No one could tell in one sermon all that ought to be thought about Jesus Christ, but he himself has told us of these great things and of how he wants men to think of him.

## VIII

### THE CHANGELESS CHRIST



## VIII

### THE CHANGELESS CHRIST

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.—*Heb. 13: 8.*

We note that the writer here ascribes to Christ a divine quality—changelessness or immutability. The thought is most impressive. Christ is placed among the great and abiding things. He is like the ocean which has rolled in its bed and borne on its bosom the ships of ancient Greeks and modern Englishmen. He is like the mountain ranges which have been gazed upon by countless generations, and like the stars which have looked down upon the long procession of races and families, upon the rise and fall of nations. Men pass. He remains. Our little systems have their day and cease to be. He is more than all the systems.

I. Let us consider first the meaning of the changeless Christ.

There are many false views here. Men think of the changeless Christ as living a detached life. He hovers above the world separated from it like the dot above the i, without interest in it. Or he sits upon the circle of the heavens gazing down with interest upon human affairs, but without taking part in them. Or he is a capricious God who forever plays with the world. He makes it spin around his finger, but it arrives nowhere, because it has no destination.

Now, all these are false views of God and of Christ. The unchangeable Christ does not mean an absent Christ, for he said, "I am with you always (all the days)." It does not mean that he is an indifferent Christ, careless of human suffering, for he says, "Come unto me all ye that labor and I will give you rest." It does not mean that he is an unhuman Christ. When the biblical writers seek for a single word to define God and Christ, they take the word which we use to define a mother's feeling toward her child, a husband's highest feeling toward a wife, a friend's deepest feeling for a friend, a brother's emotion toward his brother, and a patriot's devotion to his country. They use the all-comprehensive word and say, "God is love." So that the changeless Christ remains human, sympathetic, loving.

So then let us not err in our idea of the changeless Christ. Let us not imagine he is far away. He is near. Let us not imagine him indifferent. Let us not imagine him a helpless Christ. For John on Patmos gives us his history in one brief phrase, where in chapter 6 the rider on the white horse appears, having a bow and a crown. Of him John says: "He came forth conquering and to conquer." Later he reappears wearing many crowns and bearing his name on his vestments, King of kings and Lord of lords.

What, then, does the changeless Christ mean? It means a consistent Christ. It means a Christ ever living, ever present in human life, ever sympathizing and helping in human struggle, ever kind, ever patient, ever loving; but it means also a Christ ever self-consistent in his purpose and plan for each of us and the world. So that there will be many outward changes but one in-

ner movement, the same yesterday, today and forever. There will be threads of many colors put into the shuttles—gold and silver and brown and black and purple—but one pattern and garment. There will be many variations in the tune, but one tune. You can pick out the tune of "Home, Sweet Home" with one finger on the keyboard, or you can play it with variations. But however great the variations, the one tune is ever present. The changeless Christ for your life, then, means a Christ sitting at the keyboard, playing your own "Home, Sweet Home" with all the variations you need. Tears, laughter, anxiety, triumph, failure and success combined, blended, fused, into the unity of self-consistent, harmonious, triumphant melody. We may sum up, then, by saying the changeless Christ is one who constantly changes his method, but never changes his purpose.

## II. Consider next the methods of the changeless Christ.

It is because Christ is changeless that he frequently changes his method. It is because men change that he seems to change. Sometimes Christ works gradually and sometimes suddenly. Men have debated the question here. Some say Christ works only by evolution. Others hold that he works only by revolution. The pre-millennarian says history moves towards a climax—the second coming of Christ. Nothing much can be accomplished until he comes and sets up his throne. Post-millennarians say he works by gradual processes only, and that we must expect no very great sudden changes. The truth is that the unchangeable Christ works both ways. He is ever coming, ever leavening the world with his truth and influence. But he also comes in great catastrophes. History is like a drama with its catastrophes and climaxes. Great eras often end in tragedies

and then new beginnings. The German doctrine of might leavened Europe for generations. One day Prinzip slew the Archduke of Austria. He did not start the war. He merely dropped a match in a powder magazine. After that the deluge of the Great War and a new alignment of Christian forces. Thus the changeless Christ works both ways, by gradual preparation and by sudden upheaval.

Again the changeless Christ works by ordinary and by extraordinary methods. Faith healers tell us God will work a miracle to cure disease. They quote scripture in proof of the point. I am absolutely open to conviction on the subject. If there are cases of miracles of healing today and it can be shown to be such, I will not refuse to accept them. But I believe God works chiefly by the ordinary laws of nature and that it is a sin to refuse medical aid where there is serious illness. It is better for us that we are subject to the laws of nature. Otherwise we would be presumptuous. It is better for a boy to have an attack of cholera morbus and suffer and be cured in the ordinary way than for him to indulge his appetite for green apples in a reckless manner and then expect God to work a miracle to cure him. So our Christian Science friends attempt to abolish the laws of nature by putting new labels on things. There is no evil, no matter, no disease, they tell us. All is good, all is mind, all is God. Disease is a mental state, evil is a mental state, and matter is a form of mind. If this be true, then toothache must be a state of mind and the tools of the dentist forms of mind. Why, then, object to the dentist and his tools? If malarial fever is a mental state, and quinine is a form of mind, why not take the one to cure the other? You cannot abolish the ordinary laws of

disease and health by putting new labels on them. When Christ healed the sick, he revealed a purpose. Each healing was like a little mirror, reflecting the coming age of scientific medicine, of improved hygiene, of organized laws of sanitation, of scientifically constructed hospitals.

So also Christ works in the individual life and in the community or national life. When you look through a telescope at the order and beauty of a solar system, you are struck with God's power on a grand scale. When you look at a snowflake or an insect's wing through a microscope, you are impressed with his capacity for detail. So when the smallness of our individual life comes home to us; when we feel lonely or weak or deserted, it is a good time to remember the snowflake and the bee's wing. It is a good time to remember that he that sitteth upon the circle of the heavens also dwells in the lowly and the contrite heart. It is a good time to remember the gracious words: "He knoweth our frame." If a Christian falls into a pessimistic mood and imagines that the changeless Christ has forgotten him because absorbed in the great affairs of the universe, then he should recall the words, "He will perfect that which concerneth me."

So also the changeless Christ works by the method of law and the method of love. An Old Testament passage declares: "Thou art a God who forgavest their iniquities and tookest vengeance of their doings." The law of penalty holds. "The wages of sin is death." You cannot sow evil and reap good. You cannot sow discontent and reap inner tranquility of soul. You cannot sow unbelief and reap faith. You cannot sow selfishness and reap the admiration and appreciation of your fellows. You cannot sow ill will and reap friendship.

You cannot sow to the flesh and reap of the Spirit. You cannot sow cruelty and reap kindness. A nation cannot sow ruthlessness and reap easy peace terms. When a man pronounces a curse, if he looks up he will see a curse descending upon his head. When a man resorts to the sword he looses another sword from its scabbard which will come to destroy him. When a man treats his brother man unjustly, if he would but look he would see a throne of judgment rising on the path before him. Prussian militarism collapsed and fell in irretrievable ruin. Why? Because it came into collision with the tables of stone which Moses brought down from the mountain containing the Ten Commandments.

The changeless Christ did not abolish the moral law. He reaffirmed and established it. But he also works by the method of love and sacrifice. He himself made the great sacrifice. He became incarnate, but he did not change in so doing. He merely came out of the silence of the ages and spoke, that he might prove to our ears that he is unchangeable love. He came out of the invisible and stood before us in human form that he might prove to our eyes that God is infinite grace. He healed the sick to prove to us that God meant for us to have healthy bodies. He comforted the sad, because he meant to prove that God is a being of infinite compassion. He lived the life of a servant to prove that the most God-like thing we can do is to serve others. He seeks to work out his plans through sacrificial lives.

Christ also works by human freedom and prayer. Otherwise, he would be a changeable Christ. He answers prayer because he is unchangeably sympathetic and desirous of our success and victory. He would be changeable if he did not answer the prayer of faith.

Thus it is clear that the unchangeable Christ works by changeable methods. He works suddenly and he works gradually by slow preparations and grand climaxes. He works by ordinary means and by extraordinary. He works through the individual and through the nation. He works by law and he works by love.

III. This leads me to ask: What is the purpose of the changeless Christ?

The answer is, to make men worthy sons of God in a perfect moral kingdom. "Through the ages an increasing purpose runs," says Tennyson. What is that purpose? What is the meaning of history, with its wars and pestilences, its rise and fall of nations? Mr. W. T. Ellis has lately been to Egypt and looked at the Sphinx, that silent image of stone lying half buried in the sand beneath the great pyramids, where it has been gazing out across the desert for forty centuries. It has seen the Pharaohs rise and fall. It has seen their bodies laid away in the tomb and taken out again and exhibited in a modern museum. It has seen many an army and many a battle, from Mark Anthony down to Napoleon. It saw perhaps the infant Jesus and his mother. It has lately seen an Egyptian revolution. Now, what secret has it learned in these centuries? What is the secret of the Sphinx if it could speak? It would answer: "The Lord of history is Jesus Christ. The purpose of that Christ is the establishment of a moral kingdom, to make men worthy sons of God." It would speak two practical words, one to the nation, the other to the individual. It would say to every nation: "Four thousand years of observation have taught me that wars of conquest never succeed in the long run. Nations which live by oppression always dig their own graves. No nation can

ignore the rights of other nations and long survive." The Sphinx would say to the individual: "No self-centered life can be happy. No self-centered life can be worth much to humanity. No self-centered life will be honored by future generations."

The Sphinx would say to the dreamy and idle and speculative man: "Life is real, life is earnest, and the grave is not its goal. Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul." Therefore have a high purpose in living.

The Sphinx would say to the mere money getter: "If you had as many golden dollars as there are grains in these Egyptian sands, they alone could not make you happy, because you have more than a stomach to feed and a body to clothe. You also have a soul." The Sphinx would say to the lazy man: "Do with your might what your hands find to do."

If the Sphinx could speak, it would say: "I have seen the things that endure and the things that fail. I have seen the love of self on a vast scale when the Pharaohs built the pyramids with slave labor to glorify themselves. I have seen the love of pleasure in great personages. Witness the love affair of Anthony and Cleopatra. I have seen the love of power in a world conqueror when Napoleon said to his soldiers as he incited them to battle, 'Forty centuries look down upon you from these pyramids.' But I have also learned that the love of self is corroded and made hideous by time. I have seen that the things which give pleasure turn to ashes in your hand. I have seen that the love of power is a will-o'-the-wisp leading into the quagmire of disappointment. But there are three things custom cannot stale, time cannot wither, nor the flight of the ages corrode. One is the

love of right, another is the love of our fellow men, and the other is the love of God." Now, in all that the Sphinx says, it is just a witness for Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.

This changeless Christ makes a mighty appeal to men, if men would only hear it. He loves the bad man with an infinite love. But unless the bad man repents, his changeless love has no way of bestowing forgiveness. Men may and do sink so low in the moral scale as to refuse to repent. But he cannot sink so low as to refuse forgiveness whenever they repent. The changeless Christ cannot compel the prodigal to leave the swine and the husks and the filth. But he has ready the gold ring and the costly robe and the fatted calf for every returning prodigal. He can remake the bad man's soul like the new Jerusalem. He can give it walls of jasper and gates of pearl, but only when the soul is willing.

But, mark this, whatever men may or may not do, his purpose does not fail. He passes by one Christian with position and wealth and standing who refuses to consecrate his life to the kingdom, and chooses another who responds. One becomes a mighty power for blessing, the other remains unfruitful. So also he passes by one Christian church or denomination and chooses another for world redemption, because it offers itself gladly for the service of mankind.

The changeless Christ is calling men today as never before. He needs men, and his cause needs money. He needs willing servants who offer themselves freely for service. But men must choose for themselves.



## **IX**

**ARE WE SITTING AT THE DEATHBED OF  
CHRISTIANITY?**



## IX

### ARE WE SITTING AT THE DEATHBED OF CHRISTIANITY?

I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.—*Revelation 1: 18.*

The astounding statement was recently made in a Louisville public address that we are now sitting at the deathbed of Christianity. While such a statement startles, it must be remembered that it is not without precedent. Indeed it has occurred repeatedly in Christian history. Renan said several generations ago that “the world is living on the perfume of an empty vase.” The vase was the empty system of Christian teaching, the perfume was the surviving influence of a lovely myth, the echo of a fable that has lost its spell.

Now, Christians should not hesitate to face any facts which seem to justify such statements. Indeed we should be ready humbly to confess our sins and shortcomings. We have come short of our high aims. We have often lived below the level of our high calling. But it is always unwise to draw a general conclusion from a narrow view of facts.

One cannot fairly judge Christianity by Christians alone. Christ must be taken into account as a living, creating, personal power. If we are sitting at the deathbed of Christianity, it is because Christ has failed or

died. If Christians vindicate the claims of Christianity, it is because Christ lives and works in them.

Professor Whitehead in his recent book, *Religion in the Making*, makes two or three interesting assertions about Christ. One is that the life of Christ has the decisiveness of a supreme ideal. Another is that its glory is not the revelation of an overruling physical power, but rather in the absence of force. It is spiritual power. A third statement is that its glory is not for the world, but only for those who can discern it. A fourth statement is that Christ's vision and ideal are so decisive that history divides into two streams at the point of his entrance into the world.

Are we sitting at the deathbed of Christianity? To answer that we must face the reality and power of the life of Christ, projected and multiplied in Christianity. Let us consider this question by giving a brief glance at the answer which is given by the past, by the present, and by the future.

### I. FIRST, THEN, LET US CONSIDER THE PAST.

If you would understand the power of a great movement, do not interrogate the hours, or days, or weeks, or months, or years, or even the decades. Rather interrogate the generations and the centuries.

Consider the long preparation for Christ. He is the undertone of all the Old Testament literature. He hovers in the imagination of the prophets and leaders, not always in clear or complete outline, but as a presence and longing. In early prophecy, when the tragedy of sin had befallen the race, he is the seed of the woman who shall bruise the head of the serpent. When great leadership and divine guidance are required, "The Angel

of The Lord," that strange dramatic figure, appears to patriarchs and captains of the Lord's hosts. When Moses is to be called hence we read that God will raise up a prophet like Moses. To the later prophets the promise is that "a king shall rule in righteousness." To Isaiah's inspired vision he is the sufferer on whom the iniquities of us all are laid, who bears our griefs and carries our sorrows. When one views Mt. Blanc from a distance he is impressed with the foothills that gradually rise higher and higher as they approach the peak that towers over them. So it is when we approach Christ through the Old Testament. The prophets and prophecies rise higher and higher until in the fulness of time Christ came and started a new stream of life flowing through the world.

Dr. Glover has pointed out the marvelous transformation which followed Christ's coming in the ancient world. The old gods vanished one by one. The secret was simply this: the Christians out-thought, out-lived, and out-died the pagan; out-thought them—in a more satisfactory idea of God and the world; out-lived them—they exhibited a power in life that the pagans did not experience; out-died them—they conquered death. The influence of the martyrs in Christian history has always been that of a vital and dynamic leaven.

Go back through the centuries and test the power of the life of Christ as it flows through the lives of Christians. Emperor Julian showed by his persecutions that he would if possible blot Christianity out of existence. And it looked very dark for Christianity. One of Julian's subjects taunted a quiet Christian believer with a question. As he looked around on the apparent ruin of the Christian movement he asked the believer this

question, "What is Jesus your carpenter of Nazareth doing now?" The Christian believer with full assurance replied, "He is making a coffin for your emperor." Constantine, his father, had the vision of the fiery cross in the heavens with the words, "In this sign conquer," and the Roman Empire surrendered to Christianity. Julian could not turn back the tide.

This story has been repeated in a thousand forms through the Christian centuries. However dark the hour, however deep the pessimism of men, Christianity has had the power of rebirth. This was true in the time of Savonarola, Wycliff, Huss, Luther, Wesley, Carey, and all the other great leaders. Always Christianity renews itself, always Christ arises from the dead when men have buried him. Always after the agony and gloom of new calvaries comes the glory of the resurrection morning.

Don't ask the days or years then, but the centuries, and the answer is clear. What Christ desires comes to pass—slowly it may be, but surely. Ask the centuries what has become of piracy, of dueling, of the lottery, of slavery, and other evils. We may ask what will become of gambling and the liquor evil, and we know what the answer will be. The teaching of history is writ large: What Christ desires comes to pass.

## II. LET US CONSIDER THE PRESENT.

A man is blind who can see only signs of decay in the position of Christianity in the world. It is true the opposition is greater than ever but Christianity was never more alive than it is now. Statistics are dull and I will not bore you with them, but two or three facts may be given to show that Christianity is a going concern.

The first fact is that the evangelical churches have gained five million members in the last ten years. The second is that the sales of the Bible continue to be almost unbelievably large in all parts of the world. Thirty million copies of the Bible are printed annually. Ten millions were sold last year in the United States. In Japan seventy-five thousand Bibles were sold to the workers in the silk mills alone. Two printing houses, one in England and one in the United States, have published in all seven hundred million copies of the Bible. A hundred years ago an unbeliever declared that in thirty years the Bible would be out of print. Not only are more copies of the Bible printed and sold today than ever before, but also more books are written about Christ than ever before. Today more controversies rage about him than about any character that ever lived. Truly he is the cynosure of all eyes.

Again, look at our western civilization. Every great question is at heart moral and Christian. The supreme question back of them all is, "What does Christ think?" Is it a question of marriage and the family and divorce? Christ's teachings are the standard to which the world slowly gravitates. Companionate and trial marriage is more and more clearly seen to be a means of justifying progressive polygamy. Is it a question of relationships between capital and labor? The whole of the modern economic world is saying that Christ's Golden Rule is the key to the solution. Is it a question of the drink evil and the liquor traffic? The conscience of the nation has already spoken in Christian terms. Is it a question of democracy in government? The Christian answer is the very essence of the most advanced political theory—the inalienable right of every man to a voice in the

government under which he lives. Is it a question of international relations? The law of gravitation is scarcely more inevitable in its workings than the drift of the nations towards Christ's ideal—the recognition of mutual rights and cooperation instead of imperialism and domination. All questions of modern progress are Christian questions.

In India there is a spiritual awakening. Men are seeking God as never before. Stanley Jones in his book, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, shows that this movement is due to the discovery of Christ by the Indian peoples. In China the revolution now going on is blamed upon the Christian missionaries by thoughtful students of that country. The charge is true. The missionaries have given the Chinese a new sense of justice, a new vision of government, a new and eternal hope.

You do not see the Christian vision at all adequately unless you look at these great movements. Christ is a big game hunter. He is a lion tamer. Often his people and his enemies fail to understand him. They go out after rabbits and partridges. If they will follow him in his great undertakings they will see a new glory of God.

Today Christ pervades the world's life in ways we scarcely realize. He has created our ideals in every sphere. As Dr. George Gordon has said, when we think of the ideal infancy and motherhood, the picture of Jesus in the arms of Mary comes to mind. When we think of happy childhood, we recall his words, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." When we think of the glory of youth, our minds turn to the young man who came to Jesus whom Jesus looked upon and loved. When we think of marriage, our minds go to the wedding at

Cana. When we think of hypocrisy, we remember his denunciation of the Pharisees. When we think of treachery, we recall Judas. When we think of death and the grave, we remember his words, "I am the resurrection and the life." When our eyes turn longingly toward the other world, we think of God's kingdom as he introduced it among men.

### III. WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Christ also holds the future. His religion cannot die, because Christ himself is ultimate and final in so many ways. We may notice some of them.

1. In his moral perfection of character. The Greeks worshiped physical beauty. When Iola was asked how she knew Hercules was a god, she replied, "Because I was satisfied with him the moment my eyes fell on him. When I beheld Theseus and the other heroes I wanted them to compete in a foot race or chariot race. But Hercules was perfect in whatever he did. His every movement showed it." Now this was physical beauty and power. But men have said the same about Jesus for two thousand years in reference to the moral beauty and grandeur of his character.

2. Christ is ultimate in his way of life. He holds the answer to the undying hopes and aspirations of men. Here I offer a remarkable testimony from a modern writer who is no Christian and whose writings seem sometimes to deny the great spiritual realities. Bertrand Russell, in a book entitled *Why Men Fight*, says, "The world has need of a philosophy or a religion which will promote life. But in order to promote life it must value something higher than life." Otherwise it is animal life. "If life is to be fully human it must have some end

which is above mankind, such as God or truth or beauty." Observe that the testimony of a non-Christian man is that life in order to inspire men to fight, in order to give courage, endurance, steadfastness, loyalty, must have something above life. These are the undying convictions, hopes of men, and Christianity cannot die because it is identified with these undying convictions and hopes.

3. Christ is ultimate in his ideals for society. Men say we need a new morality. This is not so. Christ's moral teachings are as broad as life and the needs of men. Not statutes indeed—nothing like the Sherman Law and other enactments, but something much better; great vitalizing principles. Consider the relation of sunlight to vegetation. Rays of the sun cause life to spring up in every form. Visit a flower show, look at the glorious roses, pansy bed, begonia bed, geranium, hydrangias, orchids, and so on. If you could take a sunbeam and pulverize it and examine it under a microscope, you would not find a single rose or geranium—but you would find something far greater, a power that would produce them all.

America needs these principles of Christ. Europe needs them. Dr. Everett Gill says: "A few years ago an American expert came to Europe to prescribe for her many ailments. His prescription had five points in it, and each was of financial or economic nature. Such a medicine would have had the efficacy of spraying a leper with perfume. The fact is that we had sent the wrong expert. It was as foolish and futile as sending a music teacher to mend a broken leg. Europe needs Christianity far more than the services of a financial or economic expert. The distinguished gentleman knew his subject, but he did not know Europe."

Did the World War prove that Christianity had failed? Rather, it seemed to prove that everything else failed. Everything else but Christianity was tried. Shall we not give the religion of Jesus Christ a fair opportunity to solve the problems of a war-torn and sin-sick world?

4. Christ is ultimate as our deliverer from fear. The psychologists are telling us that our greatest weakness is our fears. We fear disease and accident. We fear our enemies and sometimes our friends. The nations fear each other. A great statesman said some time ago that disarmament was one way to prevent war, "but then," said he, "we must disarm psychologically first of all. The nations fear each other. The great national disease is fear." So we fear the present and we fear the future. We fear life and we fear sin and death. We fear the world and we fear the vast universe.

Now the specialty of Christ is to deliver men from fear. "Fear not" is the recurring note of the gospel. He delivered from the fear of sin by becoming the offering for our sins. He delivered from the fear of death by conquering death. He delivered from the fear of the future by assuring us that the future is in God's hands. He delivered us from the fear of nature by showing us that God our Father is behind nature. The world needs to recover that lost joy and radiance which our fathers knew and which the New Testament saints had. "Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?"

Christianity will never die so long as the world fails to deliver us from fear and so long as Christ continues to deliver us from fear.

5. Once more, Christ is ultimate as the revealer of God. The greatest question that arises from the deeps of

man's soul is who and what is God. The philosopher, Frederick Myers, was once asked this question, "If you could ask the Sphinx one question, and only one, and be sure of a correct answer, what would it be?" Instantly he replied, "It would be this: Is the universe friendly?" Ah! There you have an echo of the heart-break of humanity: "Is the universe friendly?" There is the aching void in men's souls. If you answer the question in unbelief and without Christ, you arrive at a cat-and-mouse view of the universe that says that the world about man is a hungry cat, and man is a mouse. The mouse is quite aware of the presence of the cat. He dodges in and out of his hiding places and picks a precarious living amid the scattered crumbs on the floor. But he knows that sooner or later he will be the victim. Christ's answer is that the universe is friendly. God is Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

Man's great need is that of assurance that the divine power is working in him—that is certainty in religion. Christianity has its own method of making men certain. Recall the story of the man born blind. Many efforts were made to shake his testimony, but his experience held him fast. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

In conclusion, if Christianity should die, then what? Did you ever consider the dread alternative? If Christianity should die, man's intellect would be launched on as endless a sea of speculation as before Christ came. Man would be as an infant crying in the night with no one to come to his aid. If Christianity should die, we would once more become cynics like Pilate and ask, "What is truth?" as to God, the soul, death, and the destiny of man. If Christianity should die, man would

once more be left to the Epicurean philosophy, "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." If Christianity should die, the great incentives to struggle would die. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you," would have no appeal to man. If Christianity should die, human hopes would die. Go to the cemeteries and blot out the epitaphs on a thousand tombstones, such as "I am the resurrection and the life." "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord," and "The last enemy that shall be abolished is death."

Christianity cannot die, for Christ is "alive forevermore." He lives in the hearts of his followers, his reign increases from year to year, his kingdom is spreading from sea to sea—he is the power and the life and the glory of Christianity. The vase is not empty but full, whose fragrance is pervading the world.



**X**

**MEETING THE PRESENT-DAY CHALLENGE**



## X

### MEETING THE PRESENT-DAY CHALLENGE

Nobody can diagnose present world conditions without taking the great World War into account. We are just beginning to get far enough away from it to get a comprehensive view of it. We still feel the shock of it. A negro boy asked his aged father what an earthquake is, and received the following reply: "About once in so often de atmosphere comes into violent collision wid de hemisphere, and den and dar you gits a yearthquake." We can sympathize with the old man as we look back over the recent years. Something violent happened to the world, from which we are barely beginning to recover.

We have been brought to face a new era. The supreme question is whether we shall go backward or forward. Man may easily mistake the elements of progress. Many would measure it in terms of utility by the gradual advance from the first rude blade of wood down to the modern jack-knife of highly tempered steel. Others would measure progress in terms of war, and see it in the development from the first rude club of the savage down to the sixteen-inch gun and super-dreadnaught. Yet others would express it in terms of industry and trace it from the ancient flail for threshing grain down to the modern threshing machine.

But human progress is a higher thing. It is moral and spiritual. There are two elements in it. First, the true valuation of personality, and, second, the true valua-

tion of society. The individual life on the one hand, the corporate life on the other, and their proper adjustment to each other—these are the key to social progress. The World War released these forces for a new stage. Many old things were destroyed. Obstructions were removed. We must now make the history.

I mention a few of the features which we discern in the present age. Each of them is a challenge. Behind each of them is a new vision and a new task. In each we shall see the operation of the twofold principle, personality and society, the individual and the corporate life. Our supreme task in government, in economics, in ethics, and in religion is to make the true valuations and adjustments.

First, I mention the recognition of the worth of the common man. This is one of the sure gains of the war. The old civilization valued the king, the millionaire, the philosopher, the commander. Common men were of trifling value. The state was everything. It endured, like a tree, through the generations. Common men were like the leaves that appeared fresh and green in spring, and were frost-bitten and withered in the autumn. The state was like the ocean rolling in its bed through the centuries. Common men were like the waves that rise and fall on its bosom.

This new valuation of the common man is evidenced in many ways. It was symbolized by Marshal Foch, commander-in-chief of the Allied armies, when in 1920 he made a special journey to a French port and paid military respect and honor to the body of the unknown British soldier lying in state and waiting to be borne to England and buried in a conspicuous spot in the nave of Westminster Abbey.

It is symbolized in the broken sceptres and shattered crowns that now litter the highways and byways of Europe. It is reflected in the political movements now going on in Spain and Italy where kings bow to the will of the popular leaders and hasten to make terms with every democratic movement. It was echoed even in the humor of the King of Denmark a while ago in a congress of merchants who had been complaining that business was very bad. The king, upon invitation, addressed the congress and said, among other things: "Gentlemen, you say business is bad, and so it is, especially the business I am in of being a king. The king business was never in so bad a way as today."

I mention, in the second place, as a result of this new appreciation of the value of the common man, that there is in the world a rising tide of democracy. Democracy has been defined as follows: All the liberty consistent with the common good, and all the restraint necessary to protect the common rights. Democracy is the harmonious combination of liberty and order. Liberty without order is anarchy. Order without liberty is autocracy. Sovietism in Russia is not democracy. It is autocracy standing on its head. Democracy is the individual life and the corporate life properly adjusted.

A vital part of this democratic movement is the enfranchisement of women. Very thoughtful students of affairs regard this as epochal in history, because women are idealists. A French writer, giving an account of an American tour, said he was told before reaching Boston that men often wore diplomas as shirt fronts there, that he need not be surprised if a street car conductor, in a fit of absent-mindedness, should answer a question in Hebrew or Sanskrit, and that children in the earlier

grades of school often clamored for more school hours and harder studies. This was especially true of the girls.

This same French writer was entertained in the home of a pork packer in Chicago. He was struck with the contrasted interests and ideals of husband and wife. The wife was a member of a Plato club. With her the unfailing theme was Plato, Plato, Plato. With her husband it was pork, pork, pork. The Frenchman concluded that American civilization is a conflict between Plato and pork. You remember the essay of the little girl on men: "Men are what women marry," she said.

The modern woman owes it to civilization to put her idealism into civic and political life. The franchise is regarded by many women with fear. They run from it as Moses ran from the rod which became a serpent. But when, at God's command, he seized the rod it was harmless to him and became the potent instrument of deliverance, dividing the Red Sea, and smiting the rock in the desert until a stream of water gushed from it.

Another outstanding truth is that readjustments in society must be made on the basis of human relations. We think in terms of economic or industrial or political relations. These are proper within limits. But below them all is our relationship to each other as human beings. A large employer of labor recently said that in dealing with men in his industries he regarded them, first of all, as human beings.

There is no panacea for social ills except a right attitude of man to man. Some time ago I gave an address in a college in Manchester, England. Later I met a group of twenty-five or thirty eager young men who were passionately interested in social reform. One suggested socialism, another something else. There were

numerous schemes advocated. My opinion was sought. I replied that no social scheme by itself would solve the social problems. Right thinking and right feeling of men towards other men is the prime condition. When this is realized, almost any form of social organization can be made to work.

This leads to a more fundamental truth tremendously emphasized by the World War, and that is the absolute necessity for religion in social progress. A gospel which redeems man and imparts a new heart is the cornerstone of our hopes. The trouble with many a so-called modernist is that he has a fine moral and social program, but no adequate motive power. A time table is quite valuable to a traveler; but you cannot ride from Boston to New York on a time table.

I read a very pessimistic article in a magazine recently. The writer reviewed the proposals for abolishing war. One was disarmament. But nations can easily arm again, he argued. Humanize war by abolishing the submarine and poison gas was another proposal. But this is impossible. You can humanize baseball, and possibly football, because they are friendly games, but you cannot humanize war. Then he mentioned brotherhood among the nations. This is the one cure for war. But, said he, men refuse to be brothers. The heart must be changed, and there is nothing to change the heart. This is where the gospel functions.

A part of the challenge of our age is the new vision of international relations. It is a new epoch for spiritual conquest in a difficult field. A twist has gotten into our morals in our thinking on international relations. I am not talking about the League of Nations, or the World Court, or the Disarmament Conference. I am speaking

of something much larger, viz.: basic Christian ethics, or the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. America's national temptation is not that of Jesus in the wilderness when, after forty days of fasting, the devil suggested converting stones into bread; because we are not hungry. Our temptation is not that of Jesus on the mountaintop when he was offered the glory of the nations, because we do not think any other nation has a glory compared with our own. Our temptation is that of Jesus when Satan suggested that he leap from the pinnacle of the temple, on the plea that angels would bear him up lest he dash his foot against a stone. Our temptation is to presumption. We imagine we are safe regardless of conduct. We imagine we are the favorites of heaven, that the constitution is inspired, that we bear the ark of the political covenant of mankind, and that God will strike dead any Uzzah who attempts to touch us.

God has not repealed a single moral law in our behalf. Whatsoever a nation soweth that shall it also reap. We have many writers in the daily press who never weary of warning us against any sort of European entanglements. Make money out of Europe? Yes. Send a host of commercial travelers over? Yes. But stop right there, we are told. It cannot be done. If Europe is our neighbor commercially, we cannot treat it as a heathen and publican politically. You cannot be a cosmopolitan in commercial activity and a little Jack Horner in political policy. We cannot safely claim all the business opportunities created by the World War and at the same time repudiate all the responsibilities. Whitelaw Reid has said the greatest fact of modern times was the rise of the American commonwealth. But

the American commonwealth will suffer eclipse if we lose our greatness of soul.

There has come a new view of war and peace. World peace has entered into the minds of men as a vision as never before. War has never been so hated as it is today. In the past it has been regarded as inevitable and necessary. Political economists and biologists made it a necessary part of the world's defensive equipment. Wars kill off the surplus population to keep the rest from starving. This is giving place to a higher view. Men yearn for peace. Before the Great War peace was a far-away hope. Today it is a demand in practical politics. Formerly it was a dream. Now it is a passion. Once it was a longing. Now it is a purpose. Once men prayed for it. Now it is also a program for which men will contend.

The youth movement in Europe is significant. Young people demand the abolition of war. A recent writer describes a peace meeting in Berlin attended by sixteen thousand people. As he approached the hall where the meeting was to be held he saw streams of people coming from all directions. A hoarse cry greeted his ears: "Nie wieder krieg! Nie wieder krieg! Nie wieder krieg!"—No more war! No more war! "The cheers were for peace, active peace, aggressive peace, peace pursued with a crusader's passion." Here again we have an illuminating ideal, individual and corporate. Young men are too precious in God's sight to become cannon fodder. Society must find some other way of adjusting her difficulties with her foes. No nation lives to itself. It is a part of humanity.

We may now glance at some of the qualities we need in meeting the present-day challenge.

We need, first of all, to get back to basic things. We do not need a new system of ethics. We are hunting around for novelties in poetry and music and painting and morals and religion. Germany came to grief because she collided with the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount. The old ideals in art and ethics are blazing before the eyes of the modern world like a burning bush. But only they that see it take their shoes off.

The highest statesmanship is courage to do right. World problems are too complex to be solved by sheer intellect. Moral discernment to see the next step in the direction of right and courage to take it is the formula for finding the road to endless progress. It is the key to greatness in statecraft.

Abiding loyalty to basic morals is of the essence of civic virtue. A friend of mine said to me the other day: "The prevailing American disease is civic laziness." We will right things, but we will them feebly. We become aroused temporarily over a "Teapot Dome" investigation, and then subside into the old rut. The God-and-morality party have a spasm of virtue and then a long fainting fit. The devil and his crowd are on the job three hundred and sixty-five days in the year.

The age sorely needs a revival of old-fashioned moral convictions. These are more than beliefs. A belief is something a man holds. A conviction is something which holds him. A man of beliefs hears a moving appeal for missions. The tears roll down his cheeks. He puts his hand in his pocket—takes out his handkerchief, and wipes away the tears. A man of conviction puts his hand in his pocket, takes out his purse, and puts it in the collection plate. A man has beliefs about hornets

until he stumbles into a hornets' nest. After that he has convictions on the subject.

Again, we need alertness of mind to see and embrace the present opportunity for service. Many dream away their chances until it is too late. They get the fighting spirit when the battle is over.

So also we need mental poise and fairness. I do not care for some of the current classifications such as conservatives and radicals. A conservative conserves and a radical roots up things. I think both are necessary. Root up evil. Conserve the good. A housekeeper should be a conservative as to cheese and a radical as to mice. A gardener should be a conservative as to vegetables and flowers and a radical as to weeds. The conservative is often merely the comfortable man and the radical the uncomfortable. A dog lying in a warm sunny spot in a cold house was a conservative. Another that snapped and snarled and tried to oust him was the radical. There never was a time when clear vision was more needed than today. We must resist the radicalism that would destroy great and proved values. We must conserve the gospel of the divine, atoning, and redeeming and risen and reigning Christ, and resist the modern naturalism which denies every essential of that gospel. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

We need to take a large view of our task. Three workmen on a cathedral were asked what they were doing. One said, "I am working for three dollars a day." (That was a good while ago.) Another said, "I'm cutting this stone to make it fit its place in the wall." The third said, lifting his hands and pointing to the great building, "I am trying to do my part to help build that." There were three motives on three

levels,—wages, duty, vision. True inspiration comes through vision, seeing one's task in a great context.

Finally, we need faith. God's presence in history is the hope of the world. Our faith in him makes his power effective for us. If we have the daring and the faith to claim it, we may have the equipment of the divine power for all our tasks.

XI

SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF TODAY



## XI

### SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF TODAY

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.—*Matthew 7: 24-27.*

A recent editorial in a Louisville paper was entitled, “Nine Suicides: Why?” The editor writes as follows:

“Back in the misty past, when complacency and self-satisfaction had not yet taken hold of the spirits of the sons of men, it was the custom to place a grinning skull at the head of every banquet table.

“This was the ‘memento mori’; a silent, unforgettable reminder against any too-easy optimism.

“We have outgrown that custom. To doubt that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds is akin to treason.

“Yet now and then, unexpectedly, a naked fact arises in the American scene to leer at us, like the memento mori of old, and tell us that our time, somehow, is out of joint.

“Maybe you didn’t notice it in the papers—there’s so much to read nowadays, what with the stories of great

inventions, scientific discoveries, prosperity and so on—but since the first of the year nine students in Middle Western colleges and universities have committed suicide.

"In no case was there the element of poverty, disappointed love, or scholastic failure. Apparently the young suicides simply found that modern life, modern philosophy and the modern atmosphere generally were too much to struggle against.

.....  
"All of this is surmise. But the fact of the nine suicides stands out, unforgettable and terrifying. It is a challenge and a warning. We have lost something that youth needs; we must find what it is and put it back."

This editor has put his finger on a sore spot in modern society. We ought to ask anew the question whether society is building on a rock or upon the sand. Jesus in the text has taught us how to build.

The editor does not attempt to explain the causes of the suicides. Perhaps no one can give all the causes. But I undertake to say that modern education in some of its branches is feeding young men and women upon a gospel of dirt. In some respects education has developed to a degree today beyond anything in all the past. But this is on the technical side. On the moral and spiritual side in many non-Christian institutions of learning a deadly philosophy is being taught. Upon our every remembrance of them we should thank God for our Christian schools in which the truths that redeem men are being taught.

What, then, have we lost out of modern life, which ought to be restored? I name a few of the things which we have lost, certainly in the type of education to which I have referred.

First of all, we have lost the road to happiness. Many young people in our day are substituting pleasure for happiness. They will never find happiness in the pursuit of mere pleasure. Pleasure turns to ashes in the hands, if there is nothing else in the aim and purpose. Happiness comes when we seek God and his kingdom. We never find happiness by seeking it, but only by seeking something else. The little girl who lost her pet dog in a crowded street, and tried to find him, was told to go home and the dog would follow. When she reached home the dog was waiting for her. Happiness is a pet dog which follows us around. We find it when we are hunting for something else.

Secondly, in a large measure, we have lost the incentive to effort. The son of a wealthy man lamented that he had nothing to struggle for on the material side. He did not choose his own job. He could only find an object in life by seeking the wise use of money that had been left him. Too much money left to a boy or girl is not a blessing as a rule. Character comes from struggle, from effort. Material prosperity takes away the mainspring of effort for thousands of young people.

Third, we have largely lost our ideals. The editor says "youth is the time for dreams and shimmering visions." Now if we take away the visions and dreams and the poetry of youth, life grows dull and pale and drab.

Still through the paltry stir and strife  
Glows down the wished ideal,  
And longing moulds in clay, what life  
Carves in the marble real.

In all our upward striving still  
Desire must ope the portal,  
Perhaps the longing to be so  
Helps make the soul immortal.

The poet has stated a great truth in the above. Life must have great visions and great ideals if it is to inspire. We have built in modern times a civilization which is bounded by time, which is no higher than an aeroplane can fly, and which takes as its standard of measurements, the bread and butter question, a civilization which has no eternal vocation for the soul.

Someone has said four great words inspire men. These are life, love, hope, opportunity. A world without life would be a world of death. A world without love would be a world of hate. A world without hope would be a world of despair. A world without opportunity would be a world of closed doors. Now put God into life, and you have eternal life. Put God into love, and you have a love for all mankind. Put God into hope, and the shadow of death and the grave is dispelled and you have a vision of the sunlit heights of immortality. Put God into opportunity, and all doors fly open. These are the things which inspire young life, not a materialistic civilization; not a philosophy of dirt and despair.

Fourth, we have lost our conviction as to righteousness. A woman professor recently had an article in Harpers' Magazine, entitled, "Wanted, a Substitute for Righteousness." She claimed that the old standard of right and wrong is out of date, and she proposed to substitute the ideal of beauty for the ideal of righteousness, and told how she advised a young man who was tempted to commit an immoral act, not to do so, not because it

was wrong, but because it was cheap. But you can no more control lust by such an idea than you can capture and control a tiger with a silk thread. The divine righteousness is the supreme ideal of human conduct, and nothing so inspires men as a vision of that righteousness.

Fifth, we have lost our sense of sin, and the need of redemption. We are told by these philosophers that sin is a mistake, or that sin is a fall upward—that sin is a stage in man's progress toward a higher goal, and even in the case of the Christian Scientist we are told that sin is nothing. In the old days men would be overcome with a sense of sin and guilt. They turned to Christ by faith and were redeemed by his blood. And there was born in them an undying vision of righteousness. Paul counted all things to be loss that he might attain unto the righteousness of Christ and not his own. In glory land the chief joy of redemption is sounded in the song of the redeemed who ascribe their salvation to Jesus Christ. Man must have a correct view of sin and of salvation if life is to become all that it is possible for it to become.

Again we have lost in large measure the hope of immortality and future rewards. Prof. Conklin in his volume, the *Direction of Human Evolution*, paints a picture of the future confined only to this world. The immortality of the individual he does not recognize. Prof. Leuba of Bryn Mawr College rejoices over the fact that the belief in immortality is dying among college students. Surely this is a gospel of despair. The soul of man is like a bubble arising from the lake—puncture it and it collapses. It is like a sound emitted by a tuning fork—when the vibration ceases the sound ceases. Calculations have been made, and man on the side has

been analyzed chemically, and the conclusions reached that he is worth about seventy-five cents. Spiritually he is worth nothing, because he ceases to be when the body dies.

Surely here is the key in part to the suicides of college youth. If you could compel an angel to become a frog, I think the angel would wish to commit suicide. If you were to succeed in hypnotizing an eagle into the belief that he was a worm, he would never again spread his wings and soar to the clouds, and if he knew how, I think the eagle would commit suicide. You cannot cramp the young eagles of our universities into the body of a philosophic worm. There must be a life worthy of their powers, worthy of their immortal souls, worthy of their God, if they are to be inspired to their highest effort.

Once more, we have largely lost our conception of God. Nowadays many men teach that God is merely a first cause. He is immanent in the universe but not transcendent. They teach that the universe is self-evolved, that God and the supernatural are not needed; but this is part of the philosophy of dirt. We need Christ's idea of God to inspire life. The idea of a first cause leaves you cold, but when you are told that this first cause is intelligent you become interested, and when you are told that this intelligent first cause is interested in the individual, your heart begins to warm, and when you are told that this first cause, which is interested in individuals is interested in you, that he numbers the hairs of your head, and that he orders your steps, that not a sparrow falls without him, that he is interested in your joys and sorrows, and cares for you in all the details of your life, and that he is a Father who loves you with

an infinite love, then all the joy-bells of the heart begin to ring. And this is what Christ teaches concerning God our Father.

In view of what has been said, I think I can state with the utmost confidence the following fundamentals. There are four things which man cannot do:

First of all, you cannot abolish the spiritual law of the harvest. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. You cannot sow to the flesh, and hope to reap incorruption. You cannot sow selfishness, and reap noble character. You cannot sow a philosophy of dirt, and reap the kingdom of God. You cannot sow despair, and reap hope.

Secondly, you cannot substitute a temporal law of expediency for the eternal law of right. God has written the law of right and wrong in the very texture and fiber of man's soul, and in the very constitution of the universe. Expediency will not work in the long-run. It will not bring the results which men seek. The eternal foundations of life are the commandments of God, and man will find in every instance that they are on a hopeless trail when they seek happiness, character, prosperity or civilization in any other way.

In the third place, you cannot dispense with God. In one sense man's greatness is seen in the things which he can dispense with. He used to light the darkness by means of a torch. Then he dispensed with the torch and adopted the tallow dip. Later he dispensed with the tallow dip and began to use the sperm candle. By and by he dispensed with the sperm candle and adopted the kerosene oil lamp. This served him for a long time, and now he has adopted the electric light. The time may come when he can dispense with the electric light, but

he has never been able to dispense with the sun, from which all other lights are derived. And yet the New Testament tells us that in the life to come men will be able to dispense with the sun. In the city of God they have no need of the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and the lamb of God is the light thereof. Men will never be able to dispense with God. When they attempt to do so the life, the inspiration and the power depart from them. No civilization can remain atheistic. It must return to God or return to dust. If we feed our youth upon a philosophy of dust, our civilization will crumble and perish. Rationalism and modernism have swung far away from the foundations, and we must seek to bring the world back to the eternal Christ of our salvation. We must do it wisely and we must do it skilfully, but we must do it if we are to save our generation from the perils that beset it.

In the fourth place, you cannot satisfy the thirst for the eternal from the springs of the temporal. The human soul has planted in it an eternal thirst. Man feels in himself the powers of a large and infinite life. The hope of such a life is the only hope which can keep the soul alive. Man cannot live like a beast. We have memory and we have hope. Shelley said in his poem on the "Skylark" that man differs from the beasts in his capacity to look backward and forward.

We look before and after  
And pine for what is not,  
And our sincerest laughter  
With some pain is fraught.  
Our sweetest songs are those  
Which tell of saddest thought.

All this is because man's soul is made for God and the eternal world. The temporal cannot satisfy him. Man's very nature repudiates the idea of earthly satisfaction. I have often watched a squirrel in a rotating cage going around and around and around, but getting nowhere. There was a great deal of energy, but no progress. The squirrel was simply trying to express the great longing that was in his squirrel heart. He felt in himself the need for the great forest and the tall trees, and the wide spaces, but he was confined in a narrow cage, and could not express the great life that was in him, save by the continuous going round and round. As I have looked upon the squirrel I have said, "Poor little squirrel, I am sorry for you. You have a great longing in you which you cannot express, the demand for a life for which there is no opportunity. No doubt you too would commit suicide if you knew how."

So it is with the youth that are confined in a philosophy which cramps and bars the soul from its eternal heritage.

Now all that I have been saying brings us back to Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of God. He is the divine Son, and he is the hope of the world. Every effort in our day to get rid of Christ will fail. There have been many efforts in the past. I name two or three of the efforts in which men have tried to get rid of Christ. One has been by means of philosophical analysis. Men have taken the definition of Christ's person, given by the early councils, and have pointed out, as they have claimed, the absurdities contained in them. They have pointed out that such definitions were untenable. But somehow or other their analysis could not destroy Christ.

A little later came the effort to destroy him by means of critical analysis. Men took the New Testament and brought to bear upon it all the powers of their critical skill. They tore its documents into little bits. They tried to show that they were forgeries or religious speculations of the disciples. They tried to prove that Jesus was a myth. Even now there may be found occasionally a man who takes this view, but somehow, in spite of critical analysis, Jesus went on his way doing his great work of redeeming men.

The last of all the efforts is to destroy Christ by means of scientific analysis. Modern materialistic science is trying to reduce Christ to the level of a link in the chain of evolution. They have said that the universe is evolved from primordial elements, and that man and Christ and all the divine manifestations are but stages in a natural process of evolution. And thus again men have sought to destroy Christ by scientific analysis. But in spite of the philosophical analysis, and in spite of critical analysis, and in spite of scientific analysis, as we look, there stands Jesus, towering above the level of humanity, the sublimest and the divinest figure in all time; the eternal Son of God and Saviour of mankind. By reason of his greatness he goes on unheeding the assaults of philosophy, of criticism, and of science. He stands forth as the Saviour of the soul and the Lord of man. He rises from every grave in which men have buried him. They buried him first in Joseph's tomb. He broke the bonds of death and came forth alive for ever more. They buried him in the grave of philosophy, and again he broke the bonds of death and stood forth in divine resurrection power. They are trying to bury him now in the grave of criticism and of physical science. Once

more he is breaking the bonds of death, leading captivity captive and bringing the old messages of victory and peace to the human heart. Once more he is saying to mankind, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." He is also saying to his people, "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be made witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in Judea, and in Samaria, and into the uttermost parts of the earth."



## XII

### THE INTERNATIONAL MIND



## XII

### THE INTERNATIONAL MIND

Nationalism may be defined as a group consciousness organized into government around a common sentiment, religious or political, or racial, or based on geographical unity. But in the past it has been self-centered, belligerent, defiant. It was fitly symbolized in one of our early American flags which had thirteen stripes representing the colonies. Across the stripes was the figure of a rattlesnake ready to strike. Underneath were the words, "Don't tread on me." The fitness of the symbol was seen in the fact that the rattlesnake is an American product. It has cunning and courage. It is without eyelids and hence watchful and cunning. And (God save the mark) it is the gentleman among snakes. It gives warning before it strikes.

Internationalism is nationalism born again into a larger life. It is fitly symbolized by the great horizon. Not the horizon of the worm sticking its head above the hole in the ground; nor of the rabbit looking around from the top of a hillock; nor of a squirrel looking from a treetop. It is rather the horizon of the eagle soaring against the sky. The soaring eagle, not the coiled snake, is the symbol of internationalism.

Shall we learn to think internationally? I believe we should unless we are ready to admit that world problems are beyond man's capacity. You remember Mark Twain's humor in an early story. It proceeded like

other stories for a time. Then the plot became rather complicated and abruptly the story came to an end. The humorist added a few lines in parenthesis thus: "This plot has become so complicated, the author is unable to finish it. He therefore turns over the task to the reader."

Is human history like Mark Twain's story? Has divine Providence created a plot so complicated that it will have to be abandoned as beyond even divine capacity? I think not. Even men are learning to think in larger terms of the great and complicated plot of international relations.

There are three possible attitudes of a nation towards other nations: domination, isolation, and cooperation. Domination is born of the love of power and the glorification of brute force. Isolation may be born of wise precaution for self-protection, or it may be born of fear. Cooperation may be born of generous altruism or enlightened self-interest or both.

I think the course of history, the logic of events, is tending towards cooperation. Most intelligent people now admit the great law of service as the law of life. Briefly it may be thus expressed. Serve yourself so as not to injure your neighbor. Serve your neighbor so as not to injure your family. Serve your family so as not to injure your state. Serve your state so as not to injure your nation. This must be completed thus: serve your nation so as not to injure other nations and humanity at large.

Some stop before they reach the last step. Serve your nation is the last link in the chain, the last step in the upward flight of the stairs of progress. Now I also would stress patriotism and a genuine national

spirit. Honor your own country. Be a loyal patriot. Cherish your national heritage. Believe that God has given us something unique to conserve and protect. Believe that America has a mission to the world. But believe also that America can fulfil her mission only when she recognizes that her life is a part of the common life of humanity.

I. I wish to give some of the reasons why we should learn to think internationally. There are many reasons. But there is one great comprehensive reason. It is that it is no longer optional with nations whether or not they shall think internationally. There are two kinds of ideas in national thinking, ideas which a nation chooses to think for itself, and ideas which choose a nation. Internationalism is choosing us. It has the urgency, the momentum, the irresistible might of a rising tide, driven by forces wholly beyond our control.

To grasp this truth it is necessary to take a large view of the world, and this is not easy, because our own interests are so absorbing. In one of her poems Mrs. Browning has a striking passage about the plan of the ancient Greeks to put their sculptors to work to carve Mt. Athos into the gigantic image of a man. The plan was never carried out. But Mrs. Browning uses the idea to illustrate a point. Suppose the mountain with a river at its base had been carved into the likeness of a man. A peasant might be born and grow up and cultivate a farm on the mountainside—say inside the ear of the man. He might live and die there without ever seeing the shape of the mountain as a whole because he was too close to it on his little farm. But a man a few miles away in the valley would see the subline of a human face distinctly.

The moment we take a detached view of the modern world we see the sublines of a new civilization arising out of the old. Intelligence is asserting itself as a guiding force. A new and sane internationalism is coming upon the world like the rising of a tide, like the coming of the dawn, like the shaping of a new world out of chaos. The outlines of this new age, and the ideas which are choosing us may be seen in various ways. I name a few of them:

1. The first is in the new physical relations which bind the world together. I read a story once called "The Shuttle" in which events turned upon ocean travel. The ships of the Atlantic plying to and fro were the shuttles binding Europe and America together. Now the shuttle is the symbol of the new age, based primarily on the physical unity of the world. We are bound together in spite of ourselves. A man was careless in a powder mill and wrecked a whole village. A quarantine officer was careless and New Orleans was ravaged by yellow fever. The engineer at the throttle of the engine drawing a passenger train holds the lives of all the passengers in the hollow of his hand. A Mohammedan devotee on a pilgrimage across Asia Minor to Mecca, his sacred city, is of no apparent concern to you and me. But where he develops Asiatic cholera on his return as a result of drinking the foul water of the sacred pool in Mecca and communicates it to fellow pilgrims, a startling thing happens. The machinery of the health departments of all nations begins to operate to prevent the spread of the disease. The nations are bound up physically in a bundle of life together. A hundred years ago the world was like a block of clay. You might strike it and dent it at one point. Today it is like a block of

marble. A slight blow upon it at any point causes a vibration throughout its whole length.

2. Secondly, I mention economic relationships as an indication of the way in which internationalism is choosing us. Following the World War our newspapers published long lists of European and Asiatic, South American and Australasian and even African businesses and business houses affording opportunities for American merchants. In 1920 in a six months' tour of Europe I met American business men in hotel lobbies all over Europe. They were prospecting for trade. The fundamental article in the American business man's creed is *the economic open door throughout the world*. Economic internationalism has arrived. It has chosen us, and we have chosen it. When England puts up the price of rubber Mr. Hoover addresses a stirring appeal to American business men to meet the crisis. Mr. Ford crosses the Detroit River and builds a factory in Canada in order to find an open door for trade throughout the British Empire.

3. Thirdly, I name political relationships. These are irresistibly pressing for solution. I heard a bank president recently define a pessimist. He said a pessimist is a banker who lends money to an optimist. I think I can define a pessimist. He is a man who travels in the Balkans and studies the new national boundaries of the Balkan States, as fixed by the Versailles decisions, and the psychological effect produced upon the various peoples there. I never heard President Wilson cursed except in Zegedin at the custom house as we entered Hungary. When the young customs officer saw that we were Americans he became vituperative and swore at President Wilson as the prime cause of the woes of Hungary. I wish I could forget the indignation and vehemence of

Count Apponyi in Budapest as he poured into our ears in good English the protest of Hungary against the partition and dismemberment of his country by the Versailles Peace Councils. Of one thing I was overwhelmingly convinced by my tour through the Balkan States. The old nationalism can never tranquilize Europe. A new principle must be invoked, a new attitude of nations to each other. And what is true of Europe is true in corresponding measure of all nations.

4. I name also racial relationships to show the need of international thinking. We have heard much of that modern "clash of color" and of "the rising tide of color" in the world's life. The salient fact is that the yellow and brown and black races of Asia and Africa are overflowing their boundaries and looking longingly towards the west with its scant populations and its vast areas of inviting territory. It is the pressure of population against natural boundaries. The planet is becoming too small for its occupants without a redistribution of some kind.

Now the danger of this situation appears when we observe how many explosive ideas have been turned loose on the world. Look at these a moment. We are familiar with Bolshevism. It is aristocracy standing on its head. They put the feet above the head and swear the brains are in the feet.

Another explosive idea is racial pride. Look at India and the revolt against England. Look at Japan and her deep resentment at what she deems unfair treatment. Look at China and the recent uprising of her youth against foreign domination. Race pride coupled with resentment is a dangerous idea for the peace of the world.

Another explosive idea is self-determination. It is our American idea, a great idea when adopted by a

people prepared for it, but a dangerous and explosive idea in the hands of the unprepared. It is spreading to the ends of the earth, and travelers from the far East tell us it is in danger of rising to torment us, now that we have given it currency in the world's life. In the hands of Kipling's "lowborn sullen people half-demon and half-child" it is dynamite under civilization. Along with it goes the idea of nationalism in the older sense of that word. It is a combination of self-interest and physical power, which expresses itself in armies and navies and ambition for world domination.

Another explosive idea is religious solidarity. The Mohammedan world covers a great part of India, Western Asia and Africa. It is led by religious zealots and animated by intense hatred of western peoples. Pan-Islamism is its ideal. It is a dangerous and explosive idea. It is not yet free to express itself on a world scale. But it is working like leaven in the eastern hemisphere.

Another explosive idea is the theory of the survival of the fittest. Nietzsche was its protagonist, and Germany tried it out and almost succeeded. The fittest in this biological theory does not mean the wisest or the best or the most cultivated or the most useful. The fittest biologically may mean not the highbrow, but the low brass element of humanity. Among animals and among men it means exactly the same thing: victory by means of superior brute force combined with superior skill in fighting.

Now I am no alarmist. I am not trying to stress unduly the importance of any of these explosive ideas. But I do wish to point out that they exist in the world's life and that their presence should give us pause, should

broaden our horizon to the dimensions of the human race and the welfare of all nations.

II. Having indicated how, by the force of circumstances, we are compelled to cultivate the international mind, I now point out some of the roads to world peace.

1. I name first of all, disarmament or reduction of armaments. But there are several kinds of disarmament. One is military. By agreement nations can reduce armies and navies, when they succeed in finding some standard for determining the ratio of reduction by the various governments. It is no easy undertaking, but I believe it can and will be done. The travail and groanings of overtaxed nations speak eloquently of the necessity confronting the world.

Another form of disarmament is economic. I am not speaking in terms of socialism. I mean simply that there is a basic economic interest common to all peoples. Raw materials are unequally distributed over the earth's surface, and manufactured goods are produced far better in some countries than in others. Both raw materials and manufactured goods are needed by all nations alike. The economic common interest and adjustment are almost as simple as the exchange of ice cream and fried chicken between two families at a picnic, where one has a surplus of ice cream and the other a surplus of fried chicken.

But above all there is need of disarmament psychologically. Lord Cecil said in a recent notable address that the chief obstacle to disarmament and world peace is fear. Nations are jealous of each other, suspicious of ulterior motives, afraid of attack. We must disarm here if we are ever to make much progress towards world peace.

In America this fear takes two forms. We fear a super-state, and we fear European entanglements. Both forms of the fear may be wise as dictating proper caution. But they may be the height of unwisdom if they produce a sense of false security. America is strong enough to help without being dragged down. Two things are necessary in rescuing a drowning man. You must grasp him and you must not let him grasp you. America is the giant athletic swimmer. Shall we sit on the shore and watch others drown under our eyes? If we are afraid of entanglements we might at least shove out a plank. America, however, is not sitting on the shore. We are in the water ourselves. We are already entangled. Do we forget the Maine and the war with Spain? Do we forget the *Lusitania*? Do we recall that the Irish claim that DeValera's ill-fated revolution came out of America? Do we forget that an American firm has gone to Africa to raise rubber?

2. A second road to peace is the spirit of conciliation and compromise as to ways and means. A half loaf is better than no bread. Nearly all progress in governmental affairs is through compromises as to ways and means. The militarist wants no compromise. He would fight it out. The pacifist wants no compromise. He must have all or nothing. I think President Wilson would have been stronger if he had had a little more of the spirit of give and take. Anything which brings the nations face to face through chosen representatives is good. Is it a discussion around a conference table? Good. Is it a group of treaty-guarantors as in the Locarno meeting? Better still. Is it a World Court? Perhaps best of all. Is it a League of Nations? Well, let us think it through and discuss it through to a com-

plete mutual understanding. Ideals are realized slowly. And this leads me to the third road to peace.

3. A third road to peace is faith in ideals. Civilization must find a new principle of progress. The theory of militarism, balance of power, secret diplomacy, is a failure. The so-called dreamer is the most practical man of the age. The practical idealist is the hope of the world. He alone is the man with a vision. In that vision he sees the only open door to progress, and that is the international mind. Other doors are closed. He sees also a non-partisan leaven working everywhere in America in favor of international friendship. He knows that while a hundred years ago the vision of world peace was an iridescent dream, today it is a question of practical statesmanship. He sees the ideal winning victories in practical ways, as in the Locarno treaties. He knows that the imponderables of history are the conquering forces. Higher ideals always win in the long run. He recalls England's despair with her troublesome colonies in the middle of the last century. They were becoming ungovernable and Parliament was about to set them all free. Suddenly the colonies all came back with greater loyalty than ever. Freedom was a greater and safer principle than coercion. England won by concession what she would have surely lost by the use of force alone.

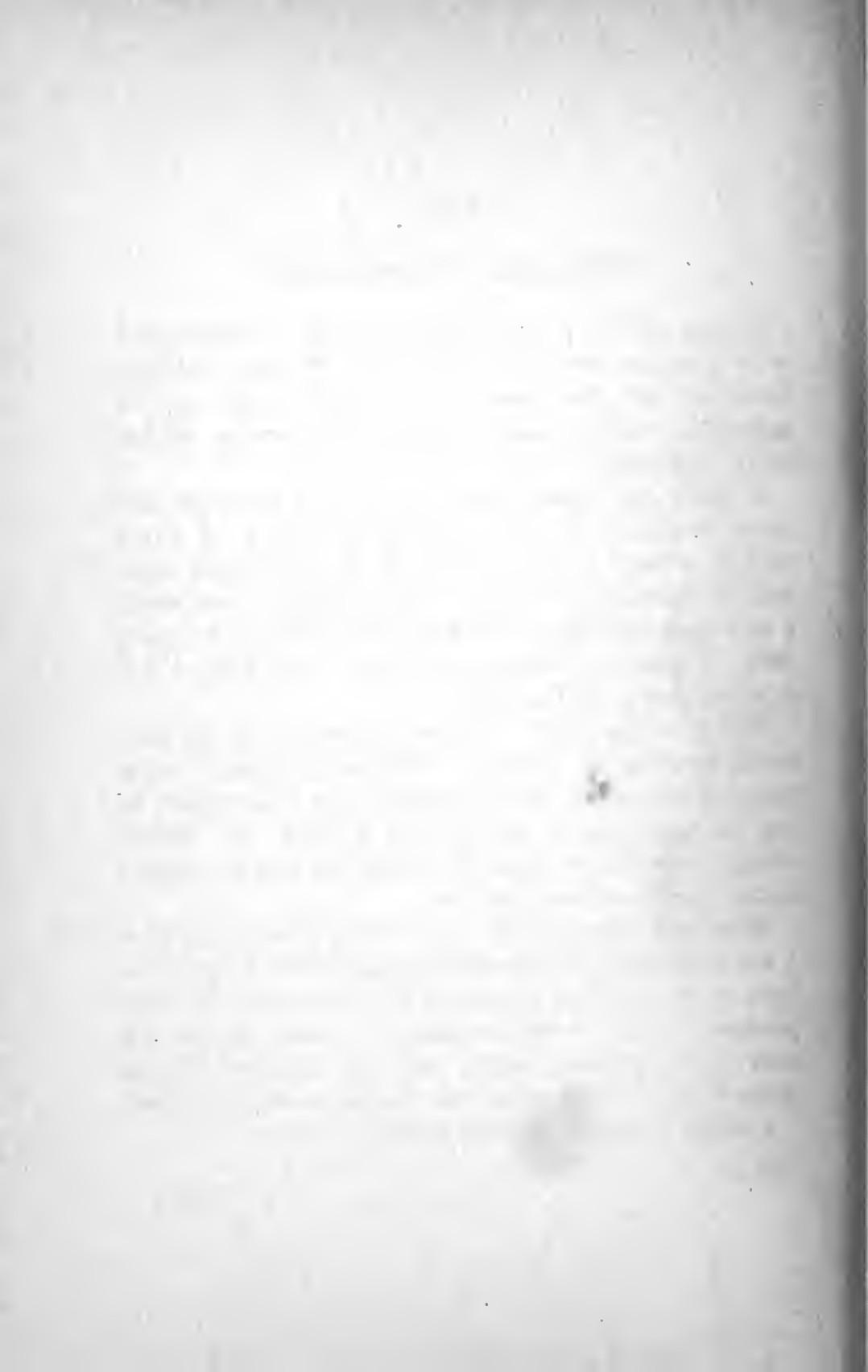
Tennyson's brother used to say that when he saw his brother seclude himself from men and become wrapped in gloom he knew he had a piece of chaos in his hands which he was working over into cosmos—and soon a beautiful poem came forth. In the World War I sometimes thought God had forgotten the world. I now see he had a piece of chaos in his hand which he was work-

ing over into the cosmos of an orderly world. Wars are not history. They are the punctuation marks of history. A little war is a comma, a bigger one a semi-colon; a yet bigger war is a colon. The great war is the period at the end of the sentence. But the history follows the war. The World War was a period at the end of a sentence, at the end of a paragraph, at the end of a chapter, at the end of a book. A new volume of history has been opened. Its theme is internationalism. Shall we play a worthy part in writing the new volume?



## XIII

### SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGNTY



## XIII

### SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGNTY

I seem all day to have been walking in the shadow of a great personality. All of us will agree without hesitation that this place\* with its institutions and its spiritual power is, under God, in a real sense the shadow of D. L. Moody.

I heard Mr. Moody under circumstances that were unusual, and favorable to a good impression. I was a student, when I first heard him, in the theological seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, the institution over which I now have the honor to preside, away back in the early '80's. I heard him again some years later when I was a young pastor in Kentucky.

The first time I got a distinct impression of his masterful handling of audiences. We met in a great building, and the crowds in the gallery caused the gallery to sag one night, and we were sure of a panic. Mr. Moody seized the audience, quieted it, had the proper changes made, and the service went on.

When as a young pastor I heard him a few years later I was impressed with his spiritual passion as I had never been up to that time impressed with any man's spiritual passion. I can at this moment, if I pause and let the ears of my memory listen, hear the thrilling, ringing notes of his voice as they come floating across the years.

I invite your attention to John 15: 7—

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\*Northfield.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Chapters 14, 15, 16 and 17 of the Gospel according to John are called the Holy of holies of the New Testament. Certainly, nowhere in the New Testament do we find that Jesus draws his disciples into relations so intimate, or pours out his soul with such vehemence and spiritual power, or discloses deeper insight, than in these chapters.

The fifteenth chapter has for a long time been my favorite of the four, though it is difficult to pick favorites in such a group of chapters. I think the seventh verse is one of the most fruitful for the spiritual life, if one takes it as it comes and accepts its meaning.

## I

Jesus is seeking to impress upon the minds of his disciples that in a real sense they may be sovereigns, spiritual sovereigns, in the sphere of their activities: "What ye will . . . shall be done."

What is the privilege of the Christian? He can have done what he will. The trouble with most Christians is they do not will enough, or what they will they will too feebly.

No teacher that ever stood on the earth gave such dignity to personality as Jesus. You know the current views about man's soul and man's will. One of those views is that man's spiritual nature is no more than the smoke that rises from the fire; that when the fire dies the smoke passes away. It is no more than the sound emitted by the vibration of the tuning fork when you strike it, so that when the vibration ceases the sound ceases.

Materialism says that is true of the soul. But it remains true today that nobody has made any connection between matter and spirit. With all the modern theories that we hear about and that we read about in the magazines and papers, behaviorism and the rest, and all the plausible explanations of how we function mentally, the great gulf is as yet unbridged between mind and matter.

Scientific men are no further along than the schoolboy who did not know his lesson, and when the teacher asked him, "What is mind?" He said:

"No matter!"

And when she asked him, "What is matter?" he replied:

"Never mind!"

That is really the best that science has ever been able to do in explanation of the connection between mind and matter. That is where the problem stands today, that mind, in all essential respects, is the negation of matter, and in all essential respects matter is the negation of mind. There may be some philosophy in the background which unifies them,—I am not here to say; but as far as scientific research is concerned there is no bond as yet to show that one is produced by the other.

You remember what Jesus said about a coin which had the image of Caesar upon it: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's!" He was constantly holding up the soul, and saying, "Render to God the things that are God's," because the image of God was stamped upon it.

It seems that in this verse and in this chapter Jesus is trying to put crowns on reluctant brows. He is trying to get these disciples to realize that they may be sovereigns in the spiritual sphere. I do not think he meant

to abate any part of the great doctrine of God's sovereignty. The most comforting and majestic of all the teachings of Jesus is that, and I take it that Jesus implied that, and that all of us here tonight will understand that, and that we will accede to the statement that by whatever road we may travel in human experience we finally come to God's eternal throne. Whether it be the road of suffering or the road of joy, whether it be the road of song or the road of distress, whether it be the road of success or the road of failure, whether we travel the long weary road of pain or the joyous road of normal health and exultation of spirit, we all come finally to stand at the foot of God's eternal throne.

That is in the background of all I am saying. But there is a throne on which the believer may sit, subordinate indeed, but there it is: "What ye will . . . shall be done."

May I tell you a personal experience? I spoke ten minutes once in a noonday prayer meeting in the city of Memphis about five years ago from this text, just stressing this one thought. A year ago at a meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention a young man sought me out. He said he had something to say to me. He asked me if I remembered the ten-minute talk at a prayer meeting. I did. He said:

"Do you remember the subject?"

I recalled the subject.

He said: "Do you know, your ten-minute talk built a church?"

I said: "That is interesting! Tell me about it!"

He said: "When I came to prayer meeting and heard you speak on that subject, and you stressed the fact that God wants us to will things, I saw a great light. I had

been trying to build a church. I am pastor in a suburban church. We raised all the money we could. I had given up, and the congregation had given up, and we decided it was impossible to build a church at that time, and we postponed it into the indefinite future. But," he continued, "when I heard that truth from you I went back home and gave it to my congregation, and within a year we built the church."

I said: "What was the matter?"

He said: "We had surrendered to difficulties, and had ceased as Christians and as a church to will things."

Am I justified in this? Study the chapter and the preceding chapters, and note the way in which Jesus repeats the thought!

"Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father."

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."

You recall what he said to the man at the foot of the mountain about healing his child.

"Lord, if thou canst do anything, help me! Save my child!"

Jesus turned upon him and said: "If THOU canst! It is not a question whether I can, but if thou canst believe. All things are possible to him that believeth."

Am I speaking to a pastor, to an officer in a church, to a teacher, to a worker? I give you the word of Jesus tonight, spoken in this solemn hour, "What ye will . . . shall be done,"—if you will it as he wants you to will it.

## II

That leads to the next thought contained here: "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done."

The first point was that spiritual privilege is stated in terms of sovereignty: "What ye will . . . shall be done."

The second point is that spiritual sovereignty is defined in terms of prayer: "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

We get our will by way of God's throne and God's will, and that brings us face to face with the great subject of prayer, which, of course, lies at the heart of the spiritual life.

If I were to ask this congregation a question, "At what point are you conscious of the greatest weakness in your spiritual life? Where would you like to make it strong first?" the majority of Christians would say:

"In the department of prayer. That is where I am weak, and that is where I would love to be undergirded and strengthened."

So it may be fitting for us to consider what are the causes of the weakness that so many of us experience in the realm of prayer in the spiritual life. I cannot enumerate them all, but I may suggest a few of the reasons.

The first reason is that we are living in a scientific age, and we have come to have a profound respect for natural law.

All things go according to the law of cause and effect. We have been almost hypnotized with the idea, so that it is difficult for us to work into our philosophy any other scheme of things that will enable us to affirm our personality in the realm of the spiritual, and override

or at least work alongside of this system of nature which is hammered into our thoughts by modern science.

Well, we need to put over against that another fact which is just as real and solid, the fact of the human will. You can build one philosophy around physical causation, and another around free causation. You can build one life conception around the idea of matter, and another around the idea of spirit. You can build a philosophy around this idea of the freedom of the will, and its power.

You remember the story that Dr. Van Dyke tells in one of his early books of the old home-spun Christian philosopher who was arguing with a skeptical opponent at a country crossroads store on this very subject. The old Christian, with a jack-knife in his hand, was whittling on a piece of wood. His opponent was sitting on the counter, arguing in favor of natural law.

"Why," said he, "the idea of answering prayer! The idea of changing God! The idea of accomplishing anything through prayer that would not otherwise come to pass is absurd, because natural law is against it."

The old Christian was arguing that will was also a factor: that it did not destroy law or violate law, but found a place in the system of law, and could use natural force for its end.

His opponent argued vehemently the other way. By and by he challenged the old Christian. He said:

"If you let go that knife, not all the power you know can prevent the law of gravitation dragging it down. It will fall to the floor."

The old Christian looked up, flipped the knife, and it stuck in the ceiling. He said:

"See, I let it go and it did not fall!"

"Oh, but you threw it up!" said his opponent.

"So I did," said the Christian. "That is the fact on which my philosophy is founded. I did not suspend the law of gravitation, or violate the law of gravitation. I merely introduced another force,—the will."

When a house is burning the law of combustion is that it will soon be reduced to ashes. The firemen come along with the hose, and the engine turns on the stream of water, and the fire is extinguished. The human will interfered with the operation of natural law.

I remember when the antitoxin cure for diphtheria was first discovered. My physician was an old-fashioned physician, and had little belief in progress, I am sorry to say. One morning he called upon us when my own little boy was sick. I had just read in the morning paper that somebody somewhere had discovered an antitoxin to cure diphtheria, and that by the injection of this antitoxin there was going to be a great revolution in the treatment of diphtheria, and children were going to be cured of it, and I was so full of joy.

When my physician came to the house I called his attention to it, and I said:

"Isn't this glorious news!"

He shook his head and pooh-poohed the idea, and said there was nothing to it. He said:

"There is a law that a certain percentage of children who have diphtheria will die, and a certain small percentage get well."

My spirits drooped, and I said: "Well, if diphtheria is under the control of a natural law, then I suppose there is no hope."

Do you know what happened? It was but a little while until they had verified the proof, and it was demon-

strated beyond a doubt that the antitoxin did cure diphtheria, and today the physicians tell us that the law of proportions has been reversed, and that now about ninety per cent of the children get well, and only about ten per cent die.

How my heart was lightened, because as a pastor I had seen diphtheria decimate the children in that thickly settled portion of the great city of Baltimore!

My friends, just as truly as the human will, working toward the cure of human disease, operated to bring about a change in the natural function of a law, so man's will and God's will and God's efforts can operate through our prayers.

One other reason why our prayers are futile often is that we are lazy in prayer.

I know of nothing that calls for greater energy of the soul than prayer.

"The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much in its working," says James.

The trouble with many of our prayers is that we will spiritual results too feebly. A Christian must get in the imperative mood before his prayers can get the full answer that they are entitled to under this promise of Jesus Christ.

Also, sometimes they fail because they are trivial. We fail to keep spiritual proportion in our lives. We do not see the relative importance of things.

Somewhere I read this story. A boy on a great ocean steamer in mid-Atlantic was playing with his ball on deck, and accidentally he bounded it over into the sea. Greatly disturbed he rushed up to the captain and said:

"O captain, I have lost my rubber ball! Won't you please stop the ship and recover it?"

The captain looked into the boy's face and said: "My dear lad, it would cost a good deal of money and time to stop and recover your rubber ball! I cannot do it."

The boy went away crestfallen. He said: "That captain has no sympathy at all for a little boy. He won't do even a little thing like that for me."

The next day there was a little girl playing with a doll on shipboard. She dropped it overboard, and she went to the captain, and said:

"Captain, I have lost my doll in the Atlantic! Will you please stop the ship and get it for me? I prize it highly."

The captain said: "Little girl, we cannot stop steamers to recover dolls! I am sorry. But show me where the doll fell overboard!"

She pointed out the place, and the captain looked, and found that the doll had not fallen into the ocean, but had caught on a projection on the vessel. He sent a sailor down and recovered the doll, and gave it to the little girl.

She went away full of joy, and said, "What a nice captain he is! He will do anything that little girls ask him to do."

The next day in the midst of a great storm a cry went up, "Man overboard!" Out there, buffeted by the billows and crying for help, was a drowning man. Instantly the captain gave orders to the engineer below. The engines were reversed and the great steamer brought to a stop as soon as possible. A lifeboat was lowered, sailors manned it, they recovered the man, and brought him on board.

When the steamer reached the other side the captain went into a toy store and bought a rubber ball and gave

it to the boy, a better one than he had lost, and then the boy was happy.

There were three prayers answered, but they were answered in different ways. They were radically different prayers, the first two and the last.

God will reverse the machinery, if necessary. I do not think it is necessary for him to do that, but when the occasion calls for it he will apply the means necessary. But he will not stop the ship of nature, he will not reverse the wheels of this universe in order to recover our rubber balls and our dolls.

What we need to do is to think in terms of proportion of spiritual values if we are to achieve the ends that Jesus sets before us here.

I name still another reason, and perhaps a more generally prevalent reason than any I have named, why Christians are weak in the department of prayer: many of them are insincere in prayer. They are not honest in prayer.

Dr. Phelps, in his little book, *The Still Hour*, gives us a glimpse of the motives that actuate many people. He says they are good devotees, but not wise petitioners. What do they do? They go to God in prayer for some object they have in mind, and they bring it to his attention and stand face to face with it, but in the midst of that solemn relationship they remember something in the life that is inconsistent with the request, and they hasten away from that subject of petition to take up another that is not so disagreeable. He says the thing for a man to do is to have it out with himself and with his conscience and with God.

A man prays to be forgiven, and he remembers someone who has done him an injury, against whom he is

hard and bitter; and instead of waiting until he has asked God to give him grace to forgive the man who has done him the wrong, he leaves it and prays about something else. Perhaps he prays that God will make him generous, and give him the spirit of sacrifice in his Christian life. Then he remembers some great cause that he has just passed by and refused to contribute to, and that subject becomes disagreeable. So, instead of having it out with his conscience and with his God, he hastens on to some other topic. So, from one refuge to another he flees. His prayers are insincere.

Sometimes we try to make a convenience of God. Prayer is a sort of expressman's box. We put a notice in it, and tell the expressman that we want something done. In fact, sometimes our prayers are like fishing with worms for fish. I have seen people who wanted things hunt around in the Scriptures for a promise, and with that promise they would go and plead with God for a blessing. That is legitimate, that is proper, in a sense: we ought to rely upon God's promises. But if we are merely hunting for a promise in order to secure something we want, apart from the deep impulses of the spiritual life, it is not genuine prayer. It is not fellowship with God.

Many Christians pray fish hook prayers, if I may call them so. They bait their prayers with a promise, in the hope that something great will come of it.

### III

That brings me to the other thought of this text.

First, I said spiritual privilege is stated in terms of sovereignty: "What ye will . . . shall be done."

Second, spiritual sovereignty is defined in terms of

prayer: "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

The third truth is that prayer is interpreted in terms of fellowship: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

Fellowship is the foundation of our power in prayer. We may think of the most beautiful relationships,—the relation between brother and brother, between brother and sister, between husband and wife, between father and child, between mother and child,—we may put all of them together, then we may enhance them and glorify them, and we may say that all of them combined cannot express the fellowship between the believer and his Lord.

They do in some faint way foreshadow it, adumbrate it. Jesus said, "He that doeth the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, my sister, and my mother."

All the human relationships are sanctified through Christ. Of course, to us the most beautiful relationship is between a mother and child, and we may take it as the best symbol of the fellowship I am trying to present to you. That fellowship consists of understanding, sympathy and love.

Fellowship with Jesus is understanding him, sympathizing with him, and loving him, in the sense of obeying him, of course.

The glory of Jesus Christ is that we grow in our understanding and our sympathy and our love for him forever. Today there are more books written about him than have ever been written, because men are trying to understand him. If we ever master him he would be like a book we have mastered. We would put him back on a shelf. But Jesus always goes ahead, and he gathers up

into the fellowship that he has for us all the tenderness and power of the early days when we first became Christians.

He teaches us to understand the Father, and our fellowship with the Father grows at the same time.

I will tell you one thing he has taught me. I have come to feel that the very objection that men have made to prayer, basing their objection on God's nature, has come to be the most convincing of all evidences that our Father answers prayer. Men say the reason they cannot believe that God answers prayer is that he is unchangeable. What is the unchangeability of God? It is his moral self-consistency. It does not mean immobility. What is the moral self-consistency of God? He is fundamentally Father, he is eternally and unchangeably Father.

This universe was made for fatherhood, with all its natural law, and the reason I believe that God the Father can answer prayer is that he is unchangeably and immutably Father.

If he could not answer prayer he would have changed from being a father, for it is of the essence of the father to give gifts to the child, and it is of the essence of the child to ask the father for what the child wants. If God could put into his cosmos, into his universe, such a thing as a nest of birds hungry and crying to the mother to bring them food, and the mother can answer with a worm, surely he has not shut himself out from coming in answer to the cry of his children who need him.

Understanding, sympathy, love. When we reach that place we have become participants in the divine passion for humanity. Our standpoint now changes entirely.

We are no longer paupers trying to wrest something from a reluctant God. We are proprietors. We own things with our Father. One of the hymns that used to be sung in the Moody meetings was, "I'm a Child of the King." The child of God becomes possessed with the idea that he is proprietor with God of this universe. "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." So it is not any longer a question of going to God and begging him for something, begging him as a pauper for something that he is unwilling to give, and worrying over the problem whether or not he can answer prayer. No, we have become the organs of his spiritual power.

It is a new point of view, a new sense of power, and we ourselves become the organ for the expression of the divine life which was given to save the world.

That is why real prayer is the most powerful thing in the universe. When a man or a woman actually has a grip on the Infinite, and is lifted up by the power of the Infinite, then a new epoch in the kingdom of God has come. The prayer itself has introduced it.

You remember John Knox's prayer. I love to think of it: "O God, give me Scotland, or I die!"

When I stood in that little bare chamber in Edinburgh where John Knox made his study, and saw the hard chairs that he sat on, and the hard table, and the narrow room, echoes of that prayer came back to me. And as I looked out in fancy on the cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow and Aberdeen, and all of Scotland, hovering above that marvelous country I saw the image of John Knox. He is stamped upon Scotland from end to end, and that epoch in God's kingdom arrived when John Knox prayed:

"Give me Scotland, or I die!"





